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Alexandre Dumas

CELEBRATED CRIMES

VOLUME I

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JOANNA OF NAPLES

Queen Joanna and Bertrand, Count d'Artois, surprised.

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Alexandre Dumas

CELEBRATED CRIMES

TRANSLATED

BY I. G. BURNHAM

ILLUSTRATED WITH PHOTOGRAVURES

AFTER

ORIGINAL DRAWINGS BY DE LOS RIOS, PRODHOMME WAGREZ, ETC.

VOLUME I

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JOANNA OF NAPLES.

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CELEBRATED CRIMES.

JOANNA OF NAPLES.

1343–1382.

During the night of the fifteenth and sixteenth January of the year 1343, the people of Naples were aroused with a start from their peaceful slumbers by the ringing of the bells of the three hundred churches of that thrice-blessed capital. In the general confusion caused by this sudden awakening, the first thought which came to everyone's mind was that the whole city was on fire, or that a hostile army had landed under cover of the night, and was putting the citizens to the sword. But the doleful, intermittent clangor of the bells, which broke the silence at long but regular intervals, and called upon the faithful to repeat the prayers for the dying, soon convinced the worthy burghers that no disaster to their beloved city was threatened, but that their king was at the point of death.

Indeed it had been for several days very noticeable that the very greatest anxiety prevailed within the precincts of the Castel-Nuovo; the great officers of the crown were called together twice every day, and the great nobles, who were privileged to enter the royal apartments seemed more and more cast down and melancholy after each visit. Meanwhile, although the king's speedy demise was known to be inevitable, the whole

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city, as soon as it became known that his last hour was really near at hand, was given over to the deepest grief, which the reader will readily understand when we explain that this king whose death was impending, after a reign of thirty-three years eight months and some days, was Robert of Anjou, the wisest and most upright and renowned monarch that ever sat upon the throne of Sicily. So it was that he bore with him to the tomb, the bitter regret and admiring eulogies of all his subjects.

His soldiers waxed enthusiastic over the long wars he had waged against Frederic and Peter of Aragon, against Henri VIII. and Louis of Bavaria, and felt their pulses throb with the glorious memories of the campaigns in Lombardy and Tuscany. The priests extolled him to the skies in their gratitude to him for having consistently defended the popes against the attacks of the Ghibelins, and for having established convents, hospitals and churches throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom. Men of letters looked upon him as the most learned man in Christendom; Petrarch refused to receive the poet's crown from any other hands than his, and passed three whole days replying to such questions as Robert deigned to put to him upon all branches of human knowledge. Men of the law, marvelling at the wisdom of the laws with which he enriched the Neapolitan code surnamed him Solomon. The nobles applauded him because of the respect he had shown to their privileges, and the people lauded his clemency, his piety and his goodness of heart. And now priests and soldiers, poets and pundits, nobles and commoners, looked forward with alarm to the succession of a foreigner and a young girl, and recalled the words of Robert himself, uttered as he was crossing the threshold

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of the church, following the dead body of Charles, his only son. He turned to the barons in attendance, and cried in a voice broken with sobs:

"This day the crown has fallen from my head; woe to me! woe to you!"

These prophetic words recurred to every mind while the bells were telling of the dying agony of the good king; the women prayed fervently, and the men hastened from all directions toward the royal dwelling to obtain the latest and most reliable news; but after waiting a few moments, which they employed in an interchange of gloomy forebodings, they were compelled to return as they had come, for nothing of what was taking place inside was allowed to transpire. The castle was plunged in utter darkness, the drawbridge raised as usual, and the guards were at their posts.

However, if our readers are desirous to witness the last scene in the life of this nephew of Saint-Louis and grandson of Charles of Anjou, it is in our power to introduce them into the dying man's apartment.

An alabaster lamp, hanging from the ceiling, lighted up a vast, gloomy room, the walls of which were hung with black velvet embroidered with *fleurs-de-lis*. Against the wall, opposite the two doors which gave entrance to the room, and which were closed at that moment, stood an ebony bedstead, under a brocade canopy—supported by four twisted columns with symbolical figures carved upon them. The king, after a violent attack of convulsions, had fallen back fainting into the arms of his physician and confessor, who had seized a hand each of the moribund, and were anxiously feeling his pulse, and exchanging significant glances. At the foot of the bed a woman of some fifty years was standing in an attitude of resigned suffering, with clasped hands and eyes gazing

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upward. This woman was the queen. In her eyes were no tears and her emaciated cheeks were of the waxen hue which is characteristic of the miraculously preserved bodies of the saints. Her general demeanor exhibited the contrast of tranquillity and suffering which reveals a soul tried by misfortune, and conquered by religious fervor.

After an hour of perfect, unbroken silence about the bed of death, the king started slightly, opened his eyes, and made a weak attempt to raise his head. Thanking with a smile the doctor and the priest, who busied themselves arranging his pillows, he begged the queen to draw near, and said to her brokenly that he wished to speak to her for a few moments without witnesses. The doctor and the confessor withdrew, bowing low, and the king looked after them until one of the doors closed behind them. Then he passed his hand across his brow, as if to brush away an unpleasant thought, and summoning all his strength for this supreme moment, he spoke as follows:

"What I have to say to you, Madame, has no connection with the two worthy men who just left us, for their task is done. One has done for my body all that human knowledge can suggest, with no other result than to prolong my agony for a brief space; the other has given me absolution for all my sins and promised that God will grant me remission thereof, but he had not the power to banish the ominous phantoms which rise before me at this awful hour. Twice you have seen me struggling in a superhuman grasp, my brow bathed in sweat, my limbs stiffened, and my cries stifled by a hand of iron. Has God given leave to the Evil Spirit to tempt me? Is it remorse, assuming the form of a ghostly apparition? Whatever it may be, the two battles I have fought with

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it have so exhausted my strength that I cannot hold out against a third attack. So listen to me, pray, my Sancia, for I have certain requests to make of you, on which the repose of my soul may perhaps depend."

"My liege lord," said the queen, in a mild and submissive tone, "I am ready to listen to your commands, and if God, in the execution of his inscrutable designs, has ordained that you should be received into his glory, and that we should be plunged in bitter sorrow, your last earthly wishes shall be fulfilled with the most scrupulous exactness. But first permit me," she added, giving voice to her timorous conscience, "to sprinkle a few drops of holy water around to drive the accursed one from the room, and to repeat a passage from the holy office which you composed in honor of your sainted brother, to implore his protection at this moment when our need is so great."

As she spoke she opened a richly-bound volume, and read with deep devotion some verses from the office, written by Robert in very elegant Latin for his brother Louis, Bishop of Toulouse, and which was used in the service of the Church down to the Council of Trent.

Insensibly soothed by the rhythm of the lines he had himself composed, the king almost forgot the purpose which led him to seek the interview with such solemn earnestness, and in a dreamy, melancholy tone, he murmured:

"Ah! yes, you are right, Madame; pray for me, I beseech you, for you too are a blessed saint, and I but a poor, miserable sinner.

"Say not so, good my lord," interposed Donna Sancia, "for you are the noblest and wisest and most upright king that ever sat upon the throne of Naples."

"But I am a usurper," Robert rejoined, in a hollow

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voice; "the kingdom, as you know, belonged to my elder brother, Charles Martel, and as he was then upon the throne of Hungary, which he inherited from his mother, the kingdom of Naples should rightfully have descended to his eldest son, Carobert, and not to myself, who am the third of the family. Well, I suffered myself to be crowned in the place of my nephew, who was the only legitimate king, thus substituting the younger for the elder branch, and for thirty-three years I have stifled the pangs of my conscience. True, I have won battles, made laws, and founded churches; but a single word gives the lie to all the high-sounding titles with which the admiration of my people has embellished my name—a word which has a louder echo in my soul than all the flattery of my courtiers, all the adulatory strains of the poets, and all the acclamations of the mob—I am a usurper!"

"Be not unjust to yourself, my liege, and reflect that your reason for not abdicating in favor of the legitimate heir was to save your people from misery and misfortune. Moreover," the queen continued with the depth of conviction with which one puts forward an argument deemed unanswerable, "you have retained the throne with the express assent and authorization of our Holy Father, the Pope, who has the right to dispose of it as a fief of the Church."

"For a long time I allowed my conscience to be put to sleep by that reasoning," the dying man rejoined, "and the pope's authorization silenced all my scruples; but however secure I may affect to feel during my life here, there is a solemn, awful hour, when all delusions are brushed away; and that hour has come for me, for I am about to appear before God, who is the only infallible judge."

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"If his justice be infallible, is not his mercy without end?" urged the queen with the eagerness of one inspired from on high. "Suppose for an instant that the dread which oppresses your soul is well founded, what fault can be so great that such a noble repentance will not wash it away? Furthermore, have you not made good whatever wrong you did your nephew, Carobert, by summoning hither his younger son, Andrew, and by giving to him in marriage Joanna, the eldest daughter of our poor Charles? Will not they inherit your crown?"

"Alas!" cried Robert with a deep sigh, "it may be that God is punishing me for having delayed this just reparation too long. O Sancia! my good, my noble Sancia! you have touched a chord which vibrates painfully in my heart, and you have yourself anticipated in a measure the sad disclosure I had in mind to make to you. I have a sinister presentiment—and the presentiments inspired by approaching death are prophetic—I have a presentiment, I say, that my nephew's two sons, Louis, who is King of Hungary, since his father's demise, and Andrew, whom I have chosen to make King of Naples, will be the scourge of my family. Ever since the day that Andrew first set foot in our castle, a strange fatality has seemed determined to set all my plans at naught. I hoped that if he and Joanna were brought up together, a loving intimacy would naturally spring up between them, and that the mildness of our climate, the refinement of our manners, and the splendor of our court would end by smoothing down the rough spots in the character of the young Hungarian; but in spite of all efforts everything seems to have contributed to inspire mutual indifference or aversion between the young people. Joanna, who is barely fifteen, seems

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very much older than that. Endowed by nature with a brilliant and versatile mind, with a noble and lofty character and an ardent imagination; at times as naïve and playful as a child, and again as dignified and haughty as any queen; innocent and trustful as a young girl, emotional and sensitive as a woman, Joanna presents a most striking contrast to Andrew, who, after a residence of ten years at our court, is wilder and more uncivilized and intractable than ever. His regular, impassive features, his stolid expression, his distaste for all those forms of enjoyment which Joanna seems to prefer, have raised a wall of antipathetic indifference between them. To her most effusive advances he makes no other response than a curt word or two, a contemptuous nod, or a frown, and he seems to be never so happy as when he can make a pretext of a hunting party to absent himself from the court. Such, Madame, are the young husband and wife, to whom my crown is destined to pass; in a few short moments they will be exposed to all the passions which are smouldering beneath the present apparent tranquillity, and are biding their time, to break forth in all their intensity the moment I have ceased to breathe."

"My God! my God!" exclaimed the queen dejectedly, letting her arms fall at her sides after the manner of the statues which weep over the graves of the departed.

"Listen to me, Donna Sancia; I know that your heart has always held aloof from earthly vanity, and that you only await the hour when God shall summon me to his judgment-seat, to retire to the convent of Santa Maria della Croce, which you yourself founded, with the hope of ending your days there. Far be it from me to select the very moment that I am about to descend unto the tomb, firmly convinced of the nothingness of all earthly

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grandeur, to try to turn you away from your blessed calling. Grant me but this one boon: remain a widow for one year before you give yourself in marriage to our blessed Lord, and during that year wear mourning garb for me, and watch over Joanna and her husband, to turn aside from their devoted heads the perils which threaten them. Ere this the wife of the grand seneschal and her son have gained too great an ascendancy over our granddaughter. Look to her, Madame, and amid all the conflicting interests, all the intrigues and all the temptations which will encompass the young queen, beware above all others of the affection of Bertrand d'Artois, the beauty of Louis of Tarento, and the ambition of Charles of Durazzo."

The king paused, exhausted by the effort it had cost him to speak at such length; he gazed supplicatingly in his wife's face, and held out his emaciated hand to her, as he added in a voice that was well-nigh inaudible:

"Once more, conjure you, do not leave the court for a year. Will you promise, Madame?"

"I promise, my liege."

"And now," resumed Robert, whose face brightened perceptibly at these words, "recall my confessor and my physician, and assemble the family; for the hour is at hand, and before many moments I shall not have strength enough to pronounce my parting words."

In a few seconds the priest and the doctor returned to the sick room, their faces bathed in tears. The king thanked them warmly for the attentions lavished upon him during his last illness and begged them to assist him to don the coarse garments of the Franciscan monks, to the end, as he said, that God, seeing that he died poor, and lowly and repentant, might the more readily deign to grant him his forgiveness. The confessor and the

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doctor placed upon his feet the sandals of the mendicant order, clothed him in the frock of Saint Francis, and tied the cord around his waist. Stretched upon his bed in this garb, with a few sparse hairs around his brow, his long white beard, and his hands folded on his chest, the King of Naples looked for all the world like one of the old anchorites, whose lives were spent in mortification of the flesh, and whose souls, absorbed in contemplation of the infinite hereafter, passed insensibly from the last ecstatic vision to eternal bliss.

He lay thus for some time with closed eyes, offering up a silent petition to the Lord. Then he ordered the spacious apartment to be brilliantly lighted as it was for the most solemn functions, and made a sign to the doctor and the priest, one of whom took his place by the pillow and the other at the foot of the dying man's bed. At the same moment the doors were thrown wide open, and the whole royal family, led by the queen, and followed by the principal nobles of the realm, took their places in silence around their sovereign's bed to listen to his last wishes.

The king's eyes rested upon Joanna, who took her place at his right hand, with an indescribable expression of affection mingled with sorrow. Her beauty was so startling and of so rare a quality that her grandfather, fascinated by the dazzling apparition, took her for an angel sent by God to soothe his dying moments. The graceful outlines of her perfect profile, her great black eyes, wet with recent tears, her pure, uncovered brow, her hair, as black and glossy as the raven's wing, her finely cut mouth, each detail of her perfect face, in short, left in the hearts of all who gazed upon it a lasting impression of mild and gentle melancholy, and was engraved on the memory in ineffaceable lines. Tall and slender,

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without the excessive slimness of most girls of her age, she had that careless, graceful carriage which imparts to the human form the undulations of a flower-stalk bending to the breeze. But, beneath all the innocent fascination and grace of her face and bearing, it was already easy to discover indications in King Robert's heiress of a firm will, determined to overcome every obstacle, and the dark circles which surrounded her glorious eyes proved that she was already under the dominion of precocious passions.

By Joanna's side stood her younger sister Maria, then twelve or thirteen years old; she too was a daughter of Charles, Duke of Calabria, who died before her birth, and of Marie de Valois, who had the affliction of leaving her while she was still an infant. A sweetly pretty child she was, but somewhat timid in the presence of so many great personages, so she stole softly to the side of Filippa, called "the Catanian," wife of the grand seneschal and governess of the young princesses, who respected her as if she were their mother.

Behind the princesses, and beside the grand seneschal's wife was her son, Roberto di Cabane, a handsome young man, of haughty mien, and somewhat dandified appearance, caressing his slight moustache with his light hand, and casting at Joanna stealthy glances of insolent admiration. The group was completed by Donna Cancia, the princesses' tire-woman, and the Count of Terlizzi, with whom she exchanged now a furtive wink, and again an ill-concealed smile.

Another group was made up of Andrew, Joanna's husband, and Brother Robert, his preceptor, who came to Naples with him from Buda, and never left him for a moment. Andrew was at this time some eighteen years of age; at the first glance one was inevitably

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impressed by the perfect regularity of his features, and by his handsome, noble face, framed by magnificent chestnut hair; but, as compared with the strikingly beautiful and animated faces of all the Italians who stood about him, his was seen to lack expression, his eyes seemed dull and dead, and there was something hard and repellent about his features which betrayed his intractable disposition and his foreign birth. As to his preceptor, Petrarch was careful to leave us his portrait: a red face, red hair and beard, short and deformed figure; proud in his poverty, rich in his squalor, and, like another Diogenes, hardly able to cover his hideous, misshapen limbs with his frock.

In a third group was the widow of Philip, Prince of Tarento, the king's brother, who was honored at the court of Naples with the title of Empress of Constantinople, which title was supposed to have descended to her as the granddaughter of Baldwin II. A man accustomed to probe the inmost recesses of the human heart would have realized at a glance what a world of implacable hatred, venomous jealousy, and devouring ambition lay hid beneath that woman's livid pallor. She was surrounded by her three sons, Robert, Philip and Louis, the last the youngest of the three. If the king had selected the handsomest, the most generous and gallant of his nephews to wear the crown after him, there can be no doubt that his choice would have fallen upon Louis of Tarento. At twenty-three he already excelled the most renowned cavaliers in warlike exercises; open-hearted, loyal and brave, he no sooner thought out a project than he made certain of its execution. His brow shone with that clear light which is the aureole of success for gifted natures; his beautiful eyes, of a soft and velvety black, subjugated hearts until resistance

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became impossible, and his caressing smile consoled his victims for their overthrow. A favored child of Fate he seemed; he had but to wish, and some mysterious power, some benignant fairy who presided at his birth, undertook to remove all obstacles and to gratify his desires.

Almost beside him, in a fourth group, was the frowning countenance of his cousin Charles of Durazzo. His mother, Agnes, widow of Jean, Duke of Durazzo, another brother of the king, was gazing at him in terror, and instinctively pressed to her heart her two younger sons, Ludovico, Count of Gravina, and Robert, Prince of Morea. Charles, a pale-faced youth, with short hair and a thick beard, bent his suspicious glances, by turns upon his dying uncle, upon Joanna and little Maria, and upon his cousins, and seemed to be so tormented by the thoughts that tumultuously thronged his brain that he could hardly keep his place. His restless, feverish manner contrasted strangely with the calm and dreamy visage of Bertrand d'Artois, who, to make room for his father, drew nearer the queen, who stood at the foot of the bed, and thus found himself opposite to Joanna. The young man was so fascinated by the princess's beauty that he seemed to see none but her in all the assemblage.

As soon as Joanna and Andrew, the princes of Tarrento and Durazzo, the Comte d'Artois, and Queen Sancia had taken their places around the bed in a half-circle in the order we have named, the vice-chancellor of the kingdom forced his way through the nobles, who thronged behind the princes of the blood, in the order of their rank, and, having bowed low before the king, unfolded a parchment bearing the royal seal, and read as follows, amid most profound silence, and in tones of portentous solemnity:

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"Robert, by the grace of God, King of Sicily and Jerusalem, Count of Provence, Forcalquier and Piedmont, vicegerent of the Holy Roman Church, doth hereby name and declare as his sole heiress to the kingdom of Sicily, on both sides of the Pharos, as well as to the counties of Provence, Forcalquier and Piedmont, Joanna, Duchess of Calabria, eldest daughter of the late Most Noble Signor, Charles, Duke of Calabria, of illustrious memory.

"And he doth name and declare the nobly born maiden Maria, younger daughter of the late Duke of Calabria, his heiress to the County of Alba and to the valley of Grati and the estate of Giordano, with all the castles and dependencies appertaining thereto; and he doth direct that the said Maria shall receive the aforesaid territories in fee from the said duchess and her heirs, but only on this condition, that if the said duchess shall choose to allot to her illustrious sister, or those having her rights in the premises, the sum of ten thousand ounces of gold, by way of compensation, the said county and other territory shall continue to be vested in said duchess and her heirs.

"And he doth further desire and direct, for sufficient reasons known to himself alone, that the said Maria shall give her hand in marriage to the Most Illustrious Prince Louis, now King of Hungary. But if any obstacle should arise to this marriage, by reason of the marriage contract hitherto entered into and signed between the King of Hungary and the King of Bohemia for his daughter, our lord the king doth direct that the said Maria shall give her hand in marriage to the eldest son of the most puissant Jean, Duc de Normandie, eldest son of the reigning King of France."

While this clause was being read Charles of Durazzo

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cast a glance of the deepest significance upon Maria—a glance which escaped the notice of all those present, whose attention was engrossed by the reading. As to the poor girl herself, her cheeks became purple with confusion as soon as she heard her name pronounced, and she was so abashed that she dared not lift her eyes from the floor.

"He doth further desire and direct that the counties of Forcalquier and Provence shall be united to his kingdom, indissolubly and for all time, under the dominion of a single person, and as an inseparable domain, even though there should be several sons or daughters, or under any other conceivable circumstances, such an union being absolutely essential for the mutual safety and welfare of the kingdom and the said counties.

"He doth further direct that in the event of the demise of Duchess Joanna—which heaven forfend!—without legitimate heirs of her body, the Most Illustrious Signor Andrew, Duke of Calabria, her husband, shall possess the principality of Salerno, with the title, and all the avails thereof, and the rights appertaining thereto, together with two thousand ounces of gold annually for his support.

"He doth further desire and direct that the queen, with the reverend father Don Philip of Cabassole, Bishop of Cavaillon, Vice-Chancellor of the Kingdom of Sicily, and the illustrious lords Philip of Sanguineto, Seneschal of Provence, Godfrey di Marsan, Count of Squillace, Admiral of the kingdom, and Charles d'Artois, Count of Aire, as her coadjutors, shall be governors, regents and guardians of the said Andrew, and the said Joanna and Maria, until they shall severally have attained the age of twenty-five," etc., etc.

When the vice-chancellor came to the end of his

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reading the king sat upright in his bed, and ran his eyes over his numerous and well-favored family.

"My children," he said, "you have heard my dying wishes. I sent for you all to come to my death-bed that you might see for yourselves how transitory is earthly glory. They whom the people denominate the great ones of the earth are they who have the most solemn duties to fulfil during their lives, and the most minute accounts to adjust after death, and in that their greatness consists. I have reigned thirty-three years, and God, in whose presence I am soon to stand, God, who has often listened to my sighs during my long and laborious career, alone knows by what thoughts my soul is tormented at the last supreme moment. Soon I shall be laid in my tomb, and I shall be dead to the world save in the memory of those who will pray for me. But before I leave you forever, do you who are doubly my daughters and whom I have loved with a twofold love, and you, my nephews, whom I have always cared for with a father's affection, promise me that you will always be united in heart and in purpose, even as you are united in my heart. I have survived your fathers, although I was the oldest of all, and it was doubtless God's purpose in that way to tighten the bonds of affection between you, to accustom you to live together as one family, and to look up to a single chief. I have loved you all alike, as a father should, without partiality or preference. I have provided for the descent of the crown according to natural law and the promptings of my conscience. There stand the inheritors of the crown of Naples. Look to it, Joanna, and you, Andrew, that you never forget the mutual love and respect which beseem a husband and wife, and which you vowed to each other at the foot of the altar. And do ye all, my

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nephews, my loyal nobles, and officers of my household, do homage to your lawful sovereigns. Andrew of Hungary, Louis of Tarento, Charles of Durazzo, remember that you are brothers; woe to that one among you who shall imitate the crime of Cain! May the blood be upon his head, and may he be accursed by the Almighty, as he is accursed by these dying lips; and may the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon the pure in heart! I ask it at the moment that the merciful God is calling home my soul."

When the king had ceased speaking, he sat motionless, with uplifted arms, and eyes gazing upward, and a flush of extraordinary brilliancy upon his cheeks, while the princes, the barons, and the officers of the crown took the oath of fidelity and homage to Joanna and her husband. When the turn came for the princes of the house of Durazzo to do likewise, Charles passed contemptuously by Andrew, and bending one knee to the floor before the princess, said in a loud voice, as he kissed her hand: "To you, my queen, do I tender my homage."

The eyes of all who heard were turned at once in terror toward the dying man, but the good king had heard nothing. As she saw him fall back stiff and lifeless upon the pillow, Donna Sancia's sobs burst forth, and she cried in a tear-choked voice:

"The king is dead; let us pray for his soul."

But on the instant all the princes rushed from the room, and all the bitter passions which had been hitherto kept within bounds by the presence of the king, overflowed together as a mountain torrent overflows its banks in time of freshet.

"Long live Joanna!" Roberto di Cabane, Louis of Tarento, and Bertrand d'Artois were the first to raise

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the cry, while the preceptor of the Hungarian prince elbowed his way through the crowd in a frenzy of excitement, and remonstrated energetically with the members of the Council of Regency, repeating again and again:

"My lords, you have forgotten the king's wishes thus speedily; you must shout also: 'Long live Andrew!'" and he thereupon suited the action to the word, and made as much uproar as all the barons together, roaring in a voice of thunder:

"Long live the King of Naples!"

But the cry was not taken up, and Charles of Durazzo, eyeing the Dominican from head to foot with a threatening stare, went to the queen, and taking her by the hand, threw back the curtain of the balcony, which commanded a view of the square and the city. The bright moonlight fell upon a vast crowd which filled every inch of space within the range of vision, and thousands of heads were raised toward the balcony of Castel-Nuovo, in breathless expectation of the announcement about to be made. Charles, stepping respectfully aside, and indicating with his outstretched hand his lovely cousin, exclaimed:

"Neapolitans, the king is dead; long live the queen!"

"Long live Joanna, Queen of Naples!" the populace replied in a single tremendous shout, which reached to every corner of the city.

The events which had followed upon each other's heels with the rapidity of the incidents of a dream, produced so deep an impression upon Joanna, that she withdrew to her own apartments, a prey to a thousand conflicting emotions; there she shut herself up on her bed, and gave free vent to her sorrow. While the conflicting ambitions of the different princes were fermenting strife around the bier of the deceased monarch,

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the young queen, repelling all attempts to comfort her, was weeping for her grandfather, whose love for her amounted to a weakness.

Meanwhile King Robert was interred with solemn ceremonial in the Church of Santa-Chiara, which he had himself founded and dedicated to the Eucharist, after he had enriched it with the magnificent frescoes of Giotto; and with divers priceless relics, among which were two columns of white marble taken from Solomon's Temple; they may be seen there to this day, behind the gallery of the high altar. And there his dust still reposes, in a tomb upon which he is represented, both in the garb of a king and the frock of a mendicant friar; his tomb is at the right of the monument of his son Charles, Duke of Calabria.

Immediately after the obsequies, Andrew's preceptor hastily assembled the principal Hungarian noblemen, and it was resolved by them, in the prince's presence and with his approval, to despatch letters to his mother, Elizabeth of Poland, and his brother Louis of Hungary, advising them of the provisions of Robert's will, and at the same time to complain to the court of Avignon of the conduct of the princes and the Neapolitan populace in proclaiming Joanna alone as Queen of Naples in contempt of her husband's rights in the premises, and to solicit a bull directing his coronation. Brother Robert, who was profoundly versed in the science of court intrigue, and combined the experience of the scholar with the craft of the monk, impressed upon his pupil that he must take advantage of the depression which seemed to have been produced in Joanna by the king's demise, and not give her favorites time to draw their toils around her, and force their advice upon her.

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But Joanna's grief was so violent and noisy that it spent itself the sooner; the sobs which convulsed her frame subsided suddenly, and thoughts of a pleasanter and less gloomy character filled her mind; the marks of tears disappeared, and a smile began to sparkle in her humid eyes, like a ray of sunshine after a storm. This change was soon perceived by Joanna's young waiting-maid, who had been watching for it anxiously, and awaiting it impatiently; she glided into the queen's room, and falling on her knees at her lovely mistress' feet, offered her congratulations in most flattering terms, and with protestations of deep attachment. Joanna opened her arms, and held her for a long while against her heart; for Donna Cancia was something more than her maid—she was the companion of her childhood, the depositary of all her secrets, and the confidant of her inmost thoughts. Indeed, it needed no more than a glance at the girl to understand the influence she exerted over the queen. Hers was one of those open, smiling countenances which inspire confidence and win hearts at first sight. Her warm, golden-hued hair, her clear, blue eyes, her mouth mischievously turned up at the corners, and her delicately formed chin, imparted an irresistible charm to her face. A playful, fickle madcap, breathing wantonness at every pore, listening to naught but words of love, clever as a serpent, and charming in her perfidy, she was, at sixteen years, as lovely as an angel, and as corrupt as a demon. The whole court adored her, and Joanna loved her better than her own sister.

"Ah! my dear Cancia," murmured the queen with a sigh," I am very sad, and very wretched."

"While I, my beautiful mistress," returned the confidant, gazing admiringly at Joanna, "am very happy to

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be able to lay at your feet, first of all, my testimony to the joy which fills the heart of every Neapolitan at this moment. Others, perhaps, will envy you the crown which gleams upon your brow, the throne which is one of the mightiest thrones in the world, or the acclamations of a whole city, which are more like worship than mere homage; but I, Madame, envy you your lovely raven hair, your dazzling glance, and your more than human grace, which bring all mankind to your feet."

"And yet you well know, my Cancia, that I am greatly to be pitied both as queen and as woman; at fifteen years a crown is a heavy burden, and I have not what the lowest of my subjects has, the right to love where I please; for I was sacrificed to a man whom I could never love, before my mind was formed."

"Nevertheless, Madame," rejoined the maid in a most insinuating voice, "there is a young nobleman at court, whose respectful devotion and heart-felt love may well lead you to forget your sufferings at the hand of this stranger, who is worthy to be neither your king nor your husband."

The queen heaved a profound sigh.

"How long has it been," she replied, "since you lost the power to read my heart? Must I confess to you that the love of which you speak makes me wretched? It is true that at the very first that criminal passion seemed to have gone very deep; I felt a new life springing up in my soul, I was carried away, fascinated by his entreaties, his tears and his despair, and by the opportunities afforded us by his mother, whom I have always looked upon as my own. I loved him; ah, God! how young I am to have had such a wretched past! Strange thoughts sometimes come thronging to my

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brain; it seems to me that he loves me not, that he has never loved me, that ambition, self-interest, unworthy motives of every description, have led him to feign a passion which he has never felt; I myself feel cold and indifferent towards him, and I cannot account for it; his presence annoys me, his gaze embarrasses me, his voice makes me tremble, I fear him, and I would give a year of my life if I had never listened to him."

These words seemed to move the young woman to whom they were addressed to the bottom of her heart; her features assumed an expression of deep sadness, she cast down her eyes, and made no reply for some moments, manifesting more sorrow than surprise. At last she slowly raised her head, and said with visible embarrassment:

"I should never have dared to pass so severe a condemnation upon the man whom my sovereign has exalted above her other subjects, by letting her glances fall upon him in kindness; but if Roberto di Cabane has deserved the reproach of fickleness and ingratitude, if he has shown himself a contemptible perjurer, he is the basest of men, for he has spurned an honor which other men would have prayed God for throughout their lives, glad to purchase it at the price of their welfare hereafter. I know some one who is weeping night and day, hopeless and inconsolable, wasting away with a cruel, lingering disease, and whom one word of pity might save even yet, if such a word should fall from the lips of my noble mistress."

"I will hear no more," cried Joanna, rising hastily from her seat; "I will sow no more seeds of remorse in my life. I have been equally unfortunate in my legitimate love, and in my criminal passion. Alas! I will make no further attempt to guide my destiny; I will

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simply bend my head without a murmur. I am queen, and I must devote myself to the well-being of my subjects."

"Do you forbid me, Madame," rejoined Donna Cancia, in a soft and caressing voice, "do you forbid me to utter in your hearing the name of Bertrand d'Artois, unhappy youth! who is as beautiful as the angels in heaven, and as bashful as a young girl? Now that you are queen, and have the life and death of your subjects in your hands, will you show no mercy to a poor fellow who has been guilty of no crime except that of adoring you and of summoning all the strength of his will to keep from expiring with joy every time that his eyes meet yours?"

"I have done my utmost to keep my eyes turned away from him," cried the queen with a burst of feeling which she tried in vain to control; but in the next breath, as if to do away the impression which her avowal was likely to have made upon her attendant, she added, in the most severe tones she could command:

"I forbid you to mention his name before me, and if he should ever dare to utter a word of complaint, I command you to tell him from me that on the day when I have reason to suspect the cause of his unhappiness he will be banished forever from my presence."

"Banish me also from your presence, then, Madame, for I shall never have the heart to comply with so cruel a command. As to the poor wretch who is unable to touch a single compassionate chord in your heart, you may strike him down yourself with your wrath, for he is here, to listen to his sentence, and to die at your feet."

She raised her voice at the last words, so that they could be heard without, and Bertrand d'Artois rushed into the room, and fell on his knees at the queen's feet.

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Some time previously the maid had noticed that Roberto di Cabane had forfeited Joanna's love by his own fault, because his tyranny had become less endurable to her than her husband's. Donna Cancia was not slow to observe thereafter that her mistress' eyes were wont to rest languishingly upon Bertrand, a comely youth of a melancholy and dreamy turn, and when she made up her mind to speak in his behalf, she was convinced that the queen was already enamored of him. Nevertheless Joanna's cheeks flushed angrily, and the vials of her wrath were on the point of being emptied indiscriminately upon both culprits, when there was a sound of footsteps in the adjoining salon, and the voice of the grand seneschal's widow talking with her son fell upon the ears of all three like a thunder-clap. The maid turned pale as death, and Bertrand felt his own danger the more, because his presence involved the ruin of the queen. Joanna alone, with the marvelous self-possession which never failed her at the most critical moments of her life, pushed the young man against the carved head-board of her bed, and concealed him completely in the ample folds of the bed-curtains; then she motioned to Donna Cancia to go to meet her governess and her son.

But before we allow these two personages, whom our readers have heretofore met in Joanna's suite by Robert's bedside, to enter the queen's bed-room, we must describe the extraordinary chain of circumstances which had brought about the incredibly rapid rise of the Catanian laundress and her family, from the lowest order of the common people to an assured place among the greatest nobles.

When Donna Violante, of Aragon, Robert of Anjou's first wife, was brought to bed with Charles, who was to die Duke of Calabria, a nurse for the new-born child

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was sought among the more presentable women of the people. After several aspirants had been passed in review, all of whom were alike remarkable for beauty of feature and youthful bloom, the princess selected a young Catanian named Filippa, the wife of a fisherman of Trapani, and herself a laundress. This young woman had indulged in strange visions as she washed her linen on the verge of the fountain; she dreamed of being presented at court, of marrying a great personage, and of enjoying the honors of exalted rank. So, when she was summoned to Castel-Nuovo, her joy knew no bounds, for the fulfilment of her dream seemed to have begun. She was duly installed at court, and within a few months of her first attendance upon the child, the death of the fisherman left her a widow.

Meanwhile Raimondo di Cabane, major domo of the household of King Charles II. who had purchased a negro slave of certain pirates, caused him to be baptized with his own name, gave him his freedom, and as he was deficient neither in address nor intelligence, appointed him to the office of chief steward; after which he went off to the war.

During his protector's absence the negro, who remained at court, managed his own affairs so well, that in a short time he was able to purchase lands, houses, farms, silver plate and horses, and to vie in magnificence with the richest noblemen in the kingdom; and as he had not ceased to advance himself in the esteem of the royal family, he rose from the steward's department to the king's wardrobe. Filippa, on the other hand, had so well earned the regard of her employers, and the princess, to reward her for her devotion to her nurseling, married her to the negro, and made him a knight as a wedding gift. Thereafter Raimondo di Cabane and

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Filippa the laundress rose so rapidly, that there was no one whose influence at court conld be compared to theirs.

After Donna Violante's death, Filippa became the intimate friend of Donna Sancia, Robert's second wife, to whom we introduced our readers in the early pages of this narrative. Charles, her foster-son, loved her like his own mother, she was the confidant of each of his wives, especially the second, Marie de Valois. As quondam laundress had ended by becoming thoroughly familiar with the customs and manners of the court, when Joanna and her sister were born she was selected to be their governess, and at the same time Raimondo was made major domo. Last of all, Marie de Valois on her death bed commended the two young princesses to her care, begging her to look upon them as her own daughters, and Filippa, the Catanian, honored thenceforth as the mother of the heiress to the throne of Naples, was able to procure the appointment of her husband to the post of grand-seneschal, one of the seven greatest offices of the kingdom, while her three sons received the honor of knighthood. Raimondo di Cabane was buried with royal pomp in a marble tomb, in the Church of the Holy Eucharist, and two of his sons soon followed him thither. The third, Robert by name, a young man of more than ordinary force of character and personal beauty, abandoned the clerical profession and was in his turn appointed major domo, and his elder brother's two daughters were married to the Counts of Terlizzi and Morcone.

Matters were at this stage, and the power of the grand seneschal's widow seemed to be established on a firm basis, when an unforeseen event dealt a sudden blow at her influence, and the lofty structure of her fortune, which

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she had built up stone by stone with so much patient labor, was undermined at its foundation, and brought near to destruction in a single day.

The sudden appearance of Brother Robert, who followed his young pupil, the destined spouse of Joanna, to the court of Naples, fell directly athwart all Filippa's projects, and seriously threatened her future. The monk was not slow to realize that so long as she remained at court, Andrew would be nothing more than the slave, and perhaps the victim, of his wife; and all his cogitations were directed to the single object of forcing her to retire, or of neutralizing her influence. The prince's preceptor and the governess of the next heir to the throne, exchanged but one piercing glance, full of meaning; their eyes as they met seemed to flash with the fire of hatred and defiance. Thereupon La Catanaise, realizing that her schemes were discovered, and lacking the courage to struggle openly against her adversary, conceived the plan of solidifying her waning power by corruption and the arts of the panderess. She gradually instilled the poison of debauchery into her pupil's mind, stimulated her youthful imagination by arousing her passions prematurely, sowed in her heart the seeds of unconquerable aversion for her husband, surrounded her with abandoned women, and gave her for her personal attendant the lovely and bewitching Cancia, whom contemporary authors stigmatize as a courtesan; and she put the finishing touch to her lessons in vice, by prostituting Joanna to her own son. The poor child, whose body was defiled before she knew what vice was, plunged into her first passion with all the headstrong ardor of youth, and her love for Roberto di Cabane was so violent and frenzied, that the crafty governess, congratulating herself upon her infamous handiwork, believed that she had acquired

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so firm a hold upon her victim that she would never try to escape.

A year rolled by, and Joanna, given over to the intoxication of her passion, had never a suspicion of her lover's sincerity. Roberto, who had much more ambition than affection in his nature, cleverly dissimulated his indifference by an affectation of brotherly affection, by blind submission to her will, and by a devotion which withstood every test; and it may well be that he would have succeeded in deceiving his mistress for a much longer time, if the young Comte d'Artois had not fallen madly in love with Joanna. The bandage thereupon fell suddenly from the young girl's eyes; by comparing the two passions, with that marvelous instinct of the heart which never deceives the woman who is beloved, she came to realize that Roberto di Cabane loved her for his own purposes, while Bertrand d'Artois would have given his life to secure her happiness. A ray of light shone upon her late past, she reviewed the incidents which had preceded and accompanied her first passion, and a shudder ran through her veins, as she reflected that she had been sacrificed to a cowardly seducer, by the woman whom she loved best in all the world, and whom she had called by the sacred name of mother.

Joanna meditated long and deeply, and bitterly deplored her fate. Outraged in all her affections at once, she nursed her grief in secret, until her wrath suddenly aroused her pride and changed her love to contempt. Roberto, amazed at the haughty and frigid bearing which she assumed towards him after her uniformly affectionate and friendly treatment, stung by jealousy, and wounded in his self-esteem, burst forth in bitter reproaches and accusation; he let fall his mask and lost his last hold upon the princess' heart.

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The grand-seneschal's widow saw that it was full time for her to interpose; she scolded her son, and accused him of having nullified all her plans by his want of tact.

"Since you have failed to obtain dominion over her by love," she said, "you must obtain it by fear. We have her honor in our keeping, and she will never dare to rebel against us. Evidently she loves Bertrand d'Artois, whose languishing glances and humble sighs are in striking contrast with your haughty indifference, and despotic temper. The mother of the princes of Tarento, the Empress of Constantinople, will be quick to grasp the opportunity to promote the love affairs of the princess in order to estrange her from her husband. Cancia will be selected for go-between, and sooner or later we shall surprise d'Artois at Joanna's feet. After that she can refuse nothing we ask."

In the interim the old king died, and Filippa, who had lain in wait uninterruptedly for the moment which she was clever enough to foresee, saw the Comte d'Artois steal into Joanna's apartments, and at once called her son in a loud voice, and said to him, as she drew him after her:

"Follow me, the queen is in our power now."

Joanna stood in the middle of the room, deathly pale, with her eyes fixed upon the curtains of her bed, and concealing her confusion with a smile; she took a step forward to meet her governess, and offered her forehead for the kiss which she was accustomed to imprint upon it every morning. Filippa embraced her with affected warmth, and she said, with a wave of her hand toward Roberto who had put one knee to the ground:

"My fair sovereign, deign to permit the humblest of your subjects to offer his sincere congratulations, and to lay his respectful homage at your feet."

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"Rise, Roberto," said Joanna, good-humoredly offering him her hand, and without the slightest tinge of bitterness in her tone. "We were brought up together, and I shall never forget that I called you my brother in my childhood, that happy time when we were both innocent of wrongdoing."

"Since you graciously permit me, Madame," retorted Roberto with an ironical smile, "I, too, will take the liberty of remembering the names you formerly deigned to bestow upon me."

"And I," Filippa interposed, "will forget that I am addressing the Queen of Naples, and embrace once more my beloved daughter. Come, Madame, banish the last trace of your melancholy; we have respected your grief thus far, but you have wept enough. It is time for you to show yourself to the worthy Neapolitans, who are still giving thanks to Heaven for bestowing upon them so lovely and so noble-hearted a queen; it is time to shower favors upon your faithful subjects, and my son, who excels them all in fidelity, comes first of all to ask a boon at your hands, in order that he may serve you with the greater zeal."

Joanna darted a withering glance at Roberto, as she replied with the utmost contempt:

"You know, my good governess, that I can refuse your son nothing."

"He asks for nothing," the governess rejoined, "except a title which he inherited from his father, and which rightfully belongs to him, the title of grand-seneschal of the Two Sicilies; I trust, my daughter, that you will see no obstacle to bestowing it upon him."

"But I must consult the members of the Council of Regency."

"The council will be only too eager to give effect to

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the queen's wishes," said Roberto, holding out the parchment to her with an imperious gesture, "you need only apply to the Comte d'Artois."

As he launched this shaft he cast a threatening glance at the curtains, which were stirring slightly.

"You are right," said the queen hastily; she walked to a table and signed the patent with a trembling hand.

"Now, my daughter, in the name of all my devotion to you during your childhood, in the name of the more than maternal affection which I have always lavished upon you, I entreat you to grant us a favor, which my family will remember gratefully forever."

The queen recoiled, flushing darkly with astonishment and wrath; but before she could find words with which to frame a reply the grand-seneschal's widow added impassively:

"I beg you to create my son Count of Eboli."

"That is not within my province, Madame; the nobles of my realm would rise in a body if I should assume upon my sole authority to raise to one of the foremost peerages in the kingdom the son ——"

"Of a laundress and a negro, you would say, Madame, would you not?" sneered Roberto. "Bertrand d'Artois might be offended, were I to be called count, as he is;" and he took a step toward the bed, carrying his hand to his sword hilt.

"In pity's name, Roberto!" cried the queen throwing herself in his path; "I will do whatever you ask." And she signed the document which made him Count of Eboli.

"And now, in order that my title may be something more than a name," continued Roberto with impudent assurance, "as you are in the mood for signing, grant

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me the privilege of taking part in the royal council, and declare that, subject to your pleasure, my mother and myself shall have a voice therein whenever affairs of importance are under discussion."

"Never!" cried Joanna, turning paler than before. "Filippa, Roberto, you are imposing upon my weakness, you are wofully insulting your queen. I have wept and suffered bitterly during these last days, laboring beneath the burden of a terrible sorrow; I am not strong enough to attend to matters of state at this moment, and I beg you to withdraw; I feel extremely faint and ill."

"What do I hear, my child?" rejoined Filippa, in a tone of affected concern; "are you really ill? Lie down at once, I beseech you."

She ran to the bed, and put her hand upon the curtain behind which the Comte d'Artois was hiding.

The queen uttered a piercing shriek and threw herself upon her governess like a wounded lioness.

"Stop," she ejaculated in a stifled voice, "here is the privilege you demand; now leave the room if you value your lives."

Filippa and her son withdrew on the instant without a word, for they had obtained all that they wished. Joanna, trembling and quite beside herself, darted toward Bertrand d'Artois, who in a frenzy of indignation, had drawn his dagger, and would have rushed after the mother and son to avenge the insults they had put upon their queen. But he was soon disarmed by the fire which shone in her beautiful supplicating eyes, by the arms which were thrown about his neck, and by the tears which flowed freely; and he, too, fell at her feet, which he kissed in a transport of passion, without thinking to ask her forgiveness for his presence there,

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without speaking of his love, as if they had loved each other always. He lavished caresses upon her, wiped her tears away, and breathed upon her soft hair with his trembling lips. Little by little Joanna forgot her anger, her vows, her repentance; soothed by the melodious words of her lover, she replied in monosyllables, without consciousness of what was taking place; her heart was beating as if it would burst, and she was fairly under the spell of overmastering love, when she was roughly aroused from her ecstasy by more noise in the adjoining apartment. This time, however, the young count was able to withdraw without undue haste to another room, and Joanna prepared to receive the inconvenient caller coldly and with stern dignity.

The person who arrived at such an inopportune moment to drive away the clouds which had gathered upon the queen's brow, was Charles, the eldest of the Durazzo family. After he had presented his fair cousin to the people as their only legitimate sovereign, he had made several attempts to obtain an interview with her —an interview which, in all probability, would be decisive. Charles was one of those men who hesitate at nothing to gain their ends; devoured by ambition; accustomed from his early youth to conceal his most heartfelt wishes under a mask of careless indifference; proceeding methodically step by step toward his goal, without deviating one hair's breadth from the course he had marked out; redoubling his prudence after every victory, and his courage after every defeat; pale and gloomy when his heart was glad, and smiling when it was filled with bitter hate; absolutely impenetrable when under the influence of the most powerful emotions of his life; such was Charles of Durazzo, who had sworn a solemn oath that he would some day sit upon the

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throne of Naples, to which he had long believed himself to be the rightful heir, as the next in succession of Robert's nephews. And indeed the hand of Joanna would have fallen to him, had the old king not chosen, toward the close of his life, to summon Andrew from Hungary, and restore to its rights the elder branch, which had quite passed out of mind.

But neither Andrew's arrival in the kingdom, nor the profound indifference with which Joanna, so absorbed was she by other passions, received the advances of her cousin Duras, caused him to falter for one second in his resolution; for a woman's love and a man's life were of no account in his eyes, when a crown was in the other scale.

After prowling around the queen's apartments during the whole of the time that she remained strictly invisible, he presented himself with respectful eagerness to inquire for his cousin's health. He had taken pains to enhance the high-bred beauty of his face, and the distinction of his figure, by a superb costume, covered with gold embroidery, and sparkling with jewels. His doublet of scarlet velvet and his cap of the same color set off to perfection the warm coloring of his skin, and his jet black eagle eye flashed fire, and gave life to his countenance.

Charles and his cousin talked for a long while of the enthusiasm manifested by the people at her accession to the throne, and of the brilliant destiny which lay before her. He sketched the condition of the kingdom rapidly and accurately, and while he was not sparing of praise for the wisdom of the queen, he adroitly indicated those matters in which amelioration was most urgently demanded; in short, he was so earnest, and at the same time so reserved and discreet in what he said that he

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succeeded in doing away with the disagreeable impression caused by his coming. Despite the errors arising from the youthful depravity which was the inevitable result of her deplorable education, Joanna's nature was essentially a noble one; rising superior to her age and her sex, when the welfare of her subjects was at issue, she forgot for the moment her singular situation, and listened to Charles of Durazzo with the deepest interest and most scrupulous attention.

Thereupon he ventured to refer vaguely to the dangers which threatened the young queen, and to the difficulty of distinguishing sincere devotion from base sycophancy and attachment springing from self-interest. He bore heavily upon the ingratitude of those to whom the most favor is shown, and in whom the most confidence is reposed. Joanna, who had such recent and convincing experience of the truth of his words, replied at first with a deep sigh, then said, after a moment's silence:

"I pray God, whom I call upon to bear witness to my uprightness and loyalty of purpose, to unmask the traitors, and show me who are my real friends! I know that the burden laid upon me is very heavy, and I do not trust over much to my own strength; but the long experience of the advisers to whom my grandfather entrusted my guardianship, the co-operation of my family, and above all, your cordial, disinterested friendship, my cousin, will assist me mightily, I trust, in fulfilling my duties."

"My most sincere wishes are for your success, fair cousin, and I have no desire to inject doubt and suspicion into your mind, at a time when there should be nothing to disturb your happiness; I have no desire to poison the delight which is manifested on all sides at your accession, with profitless regrets concerning the

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blindness of fate in placing beside the woman whom we all delight to worship—beside you, my cousin, whose most careless glance can make a man happier than the angels—a foreigner who is unworthy to possess your heart, and unfit to share your throne."

"You forget, Charles," said the queen, putting out her hand to check him, "you forget that Andrew is my husband, and that it was our grandfather who sent for him to share the throne with me."

"Never!" cried the duke, indignantly; "that man, King of Naples! Pray reflect that the city will be shaken to its foundations, that the people will rise *en masse*, and that the bells on all our churches will sound the call for a new Sicilian Vespers, before our good Neapolitans will submit to be governed by a handful of savage, drunken Hungarians, by a servile, deformed monk, and by a prince who is detested as heartily as you are beloved."

"What have you to reproach him with, I pray to know? What has he done?"

"What has he done? what have we to reproach him with, Madame? The people reproach him because he is an incapable, vulgar brute; the nobles reproach him for violating their privileges, and for openly patronizing men of obscure birth; and I, Madame," he added, lowering his voice, "I reproach him for making you unhappy."

Joanna shuddered as if a rude hand had reopened her wound; but she concealed her emotion beneath an appearance of tranquillity, and replied in a tone of absolute indifference:

"Surely you are dreaming, Charles; by what right do you say that I am unhappy?"

"Do not try to deny it, my cousin," retorted Charles; "you will but injure yourself, without benefiting him."

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The queen gazed earnestly at her cousin, as if she would read his inmost thoughts, and ascertain the real meaning of his words; but as she could not bring herself to believe in the horrible thought which came to her mind, she affected to feel perfect confidence in her cousin's interest, the better to fathom his plans, and rejoined carelessly:

"Oh! well, Charles, suppose I am not happy; what remedy would you propose for such a condition of affairs?"

"Can you ask, my cousin? Are not all means justifiable when you are unhappy, and vengeance is the end to be sought?"

"But even then we must confine ourselves to such means as are available. Andrew will not readily renounce his claims; there is a party at court in his interest, and in the event of an open rupture, his brother, the King of Hungary, might declare war upon us, and bring death and desolation upon the kingdom."

The duke smiled slightly, then his face assumed a sinister expression.

"You fail to comprehend me, cousin."

"Explain yourself then without evasion," said the queen, struggling to restrain the convulsive shudder which shook her frame.

"Listen Joanna," said Charles, taking her hand, and placing it against his heart; "do you feel this dagger?"

"I do," said Joanna, turning pale.

"One word from you, and ——"

"Well?"

"To-morrow you will be free."

"Murder!" cried Joanna, recoiling in horror; "I was mistaken, then, and you dare to suggest murder to me."

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"It is absolutely essential," the duke replied tranquilly; "to-day I simply advise it; in a short time you yourself will command it."

"Enough, wretch! I am at a loss to say whether your conduct is the more reckless or cowardly; coward you are to confess your purpose to commit a terrible crime because you feel sure that I will not denounce you; and reckless because you do not know that there are no others within hearing of your confession."

"Very well, Madame, as I have put myself in your power, you must realize that I cannot leave you until I know whether I am to consider myself your friend or your foe."

"Leave me!" cried Joanna with a gesture of disdain; "you dare to insult your queen!"

"You forget, dear cousin, that some day I may have rights of my own in connection with this kingdom of yours."

"Do not force me to order your removal from my presence," said Joanna, walking toward the door.

"Go to, my fair cousin, do not give way to your passion; I will leave you, but pray remember that I offered you my hand in friendship, and you thrust it aside. Mark well what I say to you at this solemn moment; to-day, I am the culprit—some day, perhaps, I may be the judge."

He slowly withdrew, turning his head twice, and enforcing his baleful prophecy by a significant gesture. Joanna hid her face in her hands, and sat for a long time lost in harrowing reflections; at last indignation mastered all other emotions, and she summoned Donna Cancia, and gave strict orders that no one should be admitted under any pretext whatsoever.

This prohibition did not apply to the Comte d'Artois,

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for the reader will remember that he was already in an adjoining room.

Meanwhile night had fallen, and from the Mole to Mergellino, from the Castle of Capua to Mount Saint-Elmo, the most profound stillness had succeeded to the thousand and one noises of the noisiest city in the world. The Duke of Durazzo hurrying away from the Piazza del Corregio, with a last revengeful glance at Castel-Nuovo, plunged into the labyrinth of dark, winding streets which run hither and thither in every direction in the old city, and after quarter of an hour's walk, now at a snail's pace, and again at full speed, betraying the excited state of his mind, he reached his own ducal palace near the Church of San Giovanni. He gave some orders in a rough, harsh voice to a page, to whom he handed his sword and cloak, then shut himself up in his own room, neglecting to pay a visit to his poor mother, who at that moment, in sorrow and solitude, was bewailing the ingratitude of her son, and taking her revenge, as mothers always do, in praying to God for him.

The duke strode up and down his room like a lion in his cage, counting the minutes, and fuming with impatience; he was on the point of calling a servant to repeat his orders, when two low taps on the door indicated that the person he was awaiting had come at last. He threw the door open hastily, and a man of some fifty years of age, clothed in black from head to foot, entered the room, bowing to the ground, and carefully closed the door behind him. Charles threw himself into an easy chair, gazing fixedly at the visitor, who stood before him with lowered eyes, and arms folded across his chest, in an attitude expressive of the most profound respect and unquestioning submission; at last he said to him, slowly, and weighing every word:

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"Master Nicolas di Melazzo, do you still retain any remembrance of the services I once rendered you?"

The man to whom the words were addressed shivered in every limb as if he had heard the voice of Satan, demanding the surrender of his soul; he raised his eyes to his interlocutor's face in a terrified stare, and asked in a low voice:

"What have I done, Monsignore, to deserve such a reproach?"

"I have said no word of reproach, Master Notary; I but asked you a simple question."

"Can Monsignore for one second entertain a doubt of my everlasting gratitude? I forget your Excellency's benefactions! Why, even if I were myself to lose my reason and my memory to that extent, do not my wife and my son remind me every day that we owe fortune, life and honor all to you? I committed an infamous deed," the notary continued, lowering his voice, "a forgery which would have involved not only my own life, but confiscation of my property, destruction of my home, and the poverty and shame of my only son, the very son for whom I sought, miserable wretch that I was, to assure a brilliant future by a frightful crime; you had in your hands the proofs of my crime ——"

"I have them still."

"Oh! you will not ruin me now, Monsignore," cried the trembling notary; "behold me at your feet—take my life, Excellenza, and I will die in torment without a complaint; but spare my son, as you have been so generous as to spare him hitherto; mercy for his mother! mercy, Monsignore!"

"Fear not," said Charles, motioning to him to rise; "your life is not at issue now; that may come later

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perhaps. The request I have to make of you at present is a much easier and simpler matter."

"I await your commands, Monsignore."

"In the first place," said the duke in a tone of playful irony, "I would have you draw up a contract of marriage for me in proper form."

"On the instant, Excellenza."

"Write in the first article that my wife brings me as her dowry, the county of Alba, and the domains of Grati and Giordano, with all the castles, fiefs and estates appertaining thereto."

"But, Monsignore—" the poor notary began, embarrassed beyond measure.

"Do you find any difficulty about that, Master Nicolas?"

"God forbid, Excellenza! but ——"

"What is the matter, pray?"

"Why, pardon me, Monsignore—but there is but one person in Naples whose dowry is such as your Excellency describes."

"Well?"

"And that person," stammered the notary, with increasing confusion, "is the queen's sister."

"Therefore you will write the name of Maria of Anjou in the contract."

"But," Master Nicolas ventured to remonstrate still further, "the princess whom your Excellency wishes to marry, is named in the will of our late lord the king of blessed memory, as the destined bride of the King of Hungary, or of the grandson of the King of France, unless I am much mistaken."

"Aha! now I understand your surprise, my worthy notary; this will teach you that the will of an uncle does not always control the will of a nephew."

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"In that case, if I dared—if Monsignore would deign to allow me—if I might offer my advice, I would humbly implore your Excellency to reflect that you are contemplating the abduction of a minor."

"Since when have you been so scrupulous, Master Nicolas?"

This sneering inquiry was accompanied by a look of such dire meaning that the poor notary could hardly find strength to say:

"In an hour the contract will be ready."

"We are agreed at last, then, as to the first point," rejoined Charles, resuming his natural tone of voice. "Now listen to my second commission. You have known the Duke of Calabria's valet, intimately for some years, I believe?"

"Tommaso Pace! he is my best friend."

"Excellent! Listen to what I say, and remember that the welfare or ruin of your family depends upon your discretion. It will not be long before a conspiracy will be set on foot against the queen's husband, and the conspirators will undoubtedly win over Andrew's valet, this man whom you call your best friend. Do not leave him for an instant, cling to him like his shadow, and from day to day, from hour to hour, come to me and give me a faithful report of the progress of the conspiracy, and the names of the conspirators."

"Is that the extent of your Excellency's commands for me?"

"That is all."

The notary bowed respectfully, and went out to execute the orders he had received. Charles passed the rest of the night writing to his uncle, Cardinal de Perigord, one of the most influential prelates of the court of Avignon. He begged him first of all to exert his authority to

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prevent Clement VI. from signing the bull sanctioning the coronation of Andrew, and ended the letter with the most urgent entreaties to his uncle to obtain the pope's permission for him to marry the queen's sister.

"We will see, my good cousin," he said to himself as he sealed his letter, "which of us has the clearer comprehension of his true interest. You would not accept me as a friend; so be it! you shall have me for a foe. Go to sleep if you please in the arms of your lovers; I will awake you when the time has come. Some day, perhaps, I shall be Duke of Calabria, and that title, my cousin, as you know, is the title assumed by the heir to the throne!"

From that time on, a complete change was observable in Charles' bearing toward Andrew; whenever he addressed him it was with the greatest cordiality, he cleverly humored his whims, and made Brother Robert believe that he was so far from being opposed to Andrew's coronation that his most earnest wish was to see his uncle's desires carried into effect, and that, if he had seemed at first to be actuated by different feelings, he had done what he did with the purpose of soothing the popular feeling, which would have been likely, in its first effervescence, to have lead to an uprising against the Hungarians. He declared with emphasis that he cordially detested those persons who surrounded the queen, endeavoring to lead her astray by their advice and he agreed to use whatever means were at his disposal to assist Brother Robert in his efforts to overthrow Joanna's favorites.

Although the Dominican was by no means convinced of the sincerity of the sentiments expressed by his new ally, he none the less joyfully welcomed a re-enforcement which might be of so much benefit to the cause of his prince; he attributed Charles' sudden conversion to a

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recent rupture with his cousin, and promised himself to reap all possible profit from his resentment. However it may have been, Charles succeeded so well in worming himself into Andrew's heart, that after a few days they were inseparable. If Andrew went hunting, which was the form of pleasure to which he was most addicted, Charles hastened to place his dogs and falcons at his disposal; if Andrew went riding in the city, Charles was sure to be prancing along beside him. He seconded him in all his capricious fancies, encouraged him to indulge his passion for debauchery, and inflamed his enmities; in a word he was the good or the evil spirit, who prompted all the prince's thoughts and directed all his actions.

Joanna soon saw through his schemes which, indeed, she anticipated. She could easily have wrought Durazzo's ruin by a single word, but she scorned to take a cowardly revenge upon him, and simply treated him with the utmost contempt.

The court was thus divided into two factions; on the one side were the Hungarians, led by Brother Robert, and openly supported by Charles of Durazzo; on the other side the whole Neapolitan nobility, at whose head were the princes of Tarento. Joanna, under the influence of the grand seneschal's widow and her two daughters, the Countesses of Terlizzi and Morcone, and of Donna Cancia and the Empress of Constantinople, took sides with the Neapolitan party against the claims of her husband.

First of all, the queen's partisans were careful to look to it that her name was used in all public documents without joining Andrew's with it; but Joanna, whose instinct of probity and justice guided her aright amid the corruption of the court, refused to take this decisive step until she had taken counsel with Andrew of Isernia

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one of the most learned jurists of the day, and respected equally for his high character and his great wisdom.

The prince, irritated at his exclusion from power, retaliated by acts of violence and despotism. He set prisoners free on his own responsibility, distributed favors among the Hungarians, and heaped honors and wealth upon Giovanni Pipino, Count of Altamura, the most powerful and most bitterly detested enemy of the Neapolitan nobles. Thereupon the Counts of San Severino and Mileto, of Terlizzi and Balzo, of Catanzaro and St. Angelo, and the majority of the great nobles of the kingdom, exasperated beyond endurance by the overbearing insolence manifested day after day by Andrew's favorite, decided to make an end of him, and of his protector as well, if he persisted in attacking their privileges, and snapping his fingers at their righteous indignation.

On the other hand the women by whom the queen was surrounded, encouraged her, each one in her own interest, in the indulgence of her new passion, and poor Joanna, abandoned by her husband, betrayed by Cabane, and bending beneath the weight of duties which exceeded her strength, took refuge in the love of Bertrand d'Artois and ceased even to try to contend against it; for all religious principle and every virtuous impulse had been designedly banished from the mind of the young queen, and her heart had been, when she was still but a child, twisted and distorted and made to find pleasure in vice, like the bodies of the poor creatures whose bones are broken by jugglers for the purposes of their profession. As to Bertrand, his adoration for her went far beyond the limits of earthly passion. When he reached a dizzy height of bliss, which he had never dared to hope for in his wildest dreams, the young count was near losing his

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reason. In vain did his father, Charles d'Artois, Count of Aire, a direct lineal descendant of Philip the Bold, and one of the regents of the kingdom, try to stop him on the brink of the precipice by sternly reprimanding and admonishing him; Bertrand would listen to nothing but the voice of his love for Joanna, and his implacable hatred for all her enemies. Often and often at nightfall, he could be seen standing at one of the windows of Castel-Nuovo, while the breeze from Pausilippo or Sorrento played through his hair, gazing earnestly down into the square just as the Duke of Calabria and Charles of Durazzo came galloping along side by side in a cloud of dust, returning from their evening ride. The young count would knit his pale brow into a fierce frown, his ordinarily mild blue eyes would gleam with a threatening light, and thoughts of vengeance and of death would dart through his brain. Suddenly he would start, as a hand was laid lightly on his shoulder; he would turn his head gently, lest the divine apparition should take flight, and would see standing behind him a young woman with cheeks aflame, heaving bosom, and moist and shining eyes, come to tell him how she had passed her day, and to beg for a kiss upon her lovely brow as the reward of her labors, and compensation for her loneliness during his absence. And this woman, whose duty it was to make laws and administer them, amid grave magistrates, and stern-faced ministers, was but fifteen years old; and this young man, who repressed his own grief, and meditated regicide to avenge her, was not yet twenty! two mere children they were, brought into the world to be the playthings of a cruel destiny!

Two months and some days had passed since the death of the old king, when, on Friday morning, the twenty-eighth of March, the grand seneschal's widow, Filippa,

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who had succeeded in obtaining forgiveness for the base trickery by which she had driven the queen to sign whatever her son demanded—Filippa, we say, rushed into the queen's apartments, with colorless cheeks, and in unfeigned alarm, to tell her of an occurrence which was calculated to cause a feeling of horror and grief throughout the court: Maria, Joanna's younger sister, had disappeared. The various courtyards and gardens had been searched for traces of her; every corner of the castle had been visited, and the guards questioned and threatened with the torture, to force the truth from them; no one had seen the princess, nor had any indications been found which would justify a suspicion of flight or abduction.

Joanna, overwhelmed by this unexpected blow, which added a new cause of unhappiness to her present heavy burden of sorrow, was completely prostrated at first. When she recovered somewhat from the first shock, she lost her head completely, like every poor wretch whom despair makes mad, gave orders which had already been executed, and repeated the same questions time and again, to receive always the same replies, followed by vain regrets and unjust reproaches. Soon the report was circulated through the city, and caused the most profound amazement. There was tremendous excitement in the castle, the members of the Council of Regency assembled in haste, and couriers were dispatched in all directions, spurred by the promise of a reward of three thousand golden ducats to the one who should discover where the princess was hidden. Proceedings were immediately begun against the soldiers who were on guard at the castle at the time her absence was discovered.

Bertrand d'Artois led the queen aside and confided to

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her his suspicions, which pointed directly to Charles of Durazzo, but Joanna had little difficulty in convincing him of the improbability of his supposition. In the first place Charles had not set foot inside Castel-Nuovo since the day of his stormy interview with the queen, making a great show always of parting from Andrew at the bridge whenever he went with him into the city. In the second place, the duke had never been known to address a word to Maria, or to exchange a glance with her.

The result of all the investigations was that no stranger had been admitted to the castle the night before the disappearance, with the exception of one Master Nicolas di Melazzo, a half-mad, half-fanatical notary, for whom Tommaso Pace, the Duke of Calabria's valet, was willing to answer with his life.

Bertrand yielded to the queen's reasoning, and every day he put forward some new hypothesis, each less probable than the last, to keep alive in the breast of his mistress a hope which he was far from sharing.

A month after the young princess' disappearance, on the morning of the thirtieth of April, a strange and incredible transaction, the surpassing audacity of which exceeded all bounds, struck the people of Naples dumb with amazement, and changed the grief of Joanna and her friends to bitter indignation. As twelve o'clock was striking on the bells of the Church of San Giovanni, the great doors of the noble palace of the Durazzo family were flung wide open, and a double row of horsemen, mounted upon richly caparisoned horses, and bearing the duke's crest upon their shields, rode out of the courtyard to the sound of trumpets, and stationed themselves all around the mansion to prevent those without from interfering with the ceremony which was about to be

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performed in the presence of a vast concourse of people, who had assembled in the twinkling of an eye, as if by enchantment. At the lower end of the courtyard an altar had been erected, and upon the platform were two cushions of crimson velvet, upon which the lilies of France and the ducal coronet were embroidered in gold.

Charles then came forth, clad in a costume of dazzling magnificence, and leading by the hand the queen's sister, the missing Princess Maria, a mere child of thirteen years at most. She knelt timidly upon one of the cushions, and when Charles had done the same, the grand almoner of the house of Durazzo, in solemn tones, asked the duke what his purpose was in presenting himself in that humble attitude before one of the ministers of the Church. Thereupon Master Nicolas di Melazzo took his stand at the left of the altar, and in a clear, firm voice read first the contract of marriage between Charles and Maria, and secondly the apostolic letter from his Holiness, Pope Clement VI., who by virtue of his full power swept away all possible obstacles to the union, arising from the age of the young princess, and the degree of relationship between the two, and authorized his beloved son Charles, Duke of Durazzo and Albania, to wed the illustrious princess, Maria of Anjou, sister of Joanna, Queen of Naples and Jerusalem, and bestowed his benediction upon them.

The almoner then took the princess' hand, and having placed it in Charles', repeated the prayers appointed by the church for the nuptial ceremony. Whereupon Charles, turning half around toward the spectators, said in a loud voice:

"Before God and man, this woman is my wife."

"And this man is my husband," rejoined Maria, in faltering accents.

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"Long live the Duke and Duchess of Durazzo!" cried the crowd, clapping their hands.

The newly made husband and wife immediately mounted two beautiful horses, and made the circuit of the city in solemn form, followed by their knights and pages, after which they returned to their palace amid the acclamations of the people and the blare of trumpets.

When this incredible performance was reported to the queen, her first feeling was heartfelt joy that her sister was found; and when Bertrand d'Artois proposed to take horse at the head of the nobles, fall upon the procession, and punish the abductor, Joanna stayed him with a motion of her hand, gazing sadly upon him.

"Alas!" she said, "it is too late! They are lawfully wed, since the head of the Church, who is also, according to my grandfather's desire, the head of our family, has sanctioned their union. But I do feel a great pity for my poor sister—I pity her from the bottom of my heart for having fallen a victim, so early in life, to a miserable villain, who has sacrificed her to his ambition, hoping by this alliance to acquire a claim to my crown. My God! what an awful fatality pursues the family of Anjou! My father died young in the midst of his successful career; my poor mother soon followed him to the tomb; and here are my sister and myself, the last of the line of Charles I., both given over, even before we have reached maturity, to base wretches who look upon us simply as steps to help them mount to power."

Joanna fell back upon her chair, and a tear-drop trembled on her eye-lash.

"This is the second time," said Bertrand reproachfully, "that I have drawn my sword to avenge insults offered to you, and it is the second time that I have sheathed my sword again at your command. But

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remember this, Joanna, that I shall not be so docile the third time; for then my vengeance will fall, not upon Roberto di Cabane, nor upon Charles of Durazzo, but upon him who is the real source of all your unhappiness."

"In pity's name, Bertrand, do not you, too, utter such words; let me come to you whenever that horrible thought takes possession of my mind, whenever that murderous threat rings in my ears, whenever that awful picture rises before my eyes; let me come to you, my best beloved, to weep on your breast, to cool my burning brow with your breath, to borrow from your eyes a little courage to revive my sinking heart. Ah me! I am unhappy enough without poisoning my whole future with an everlasting cause for remorse. Speak to me rather of forgiving and forgetting, instead of harping upon the themes of hatred and revenge; show me a ray of hope shining through the dark clouds which encompass me, and sustain my tottering steps instead of pushing me into the abyss."

Discussions of this sort were repeated day after day at every new move of Andrew or his faction; and in proportion as the arguments of Bertrand and the rest of the queen's friends, became more emphatic, and, if we must say it, more just, Joanna's resistance grew weaker. The dominion of the Hungarians, which became every day more overbearing and unendurable, irritated the public mind to such a degree that the people muttered about it in undertones, and the nobles expressed their dissatisfaction aloud. Andrew's soldiers indulged in excesses which would not have been put up with in a conquered city; they were to be met with at every turn, quarreling in the taverns, or wallowing in the gutters in a beastly state of intoxication, and the prince, far from

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frowning upon their orgies, was accused of taking part in them. His former governor, who ought, in common decency, to have exerted his authority to lead him away from this ignoble existence, encouraged him in brutish excesses in order to turn his mind away from business, and thus hastened, without suspecting it, the crisis of the terrible drama which was being secretly enacted in Castel-Nuovo.

King Robert's widow, Donna Sancia of Aragon, the excellent saintlike woman, whom our readers have perhaps forgotten as her family did, seeing that the divine wrath continued to be visited upon her household, and that it was beyond her power to avert it by her advice, her prayers or her tears, took the veil at the convent of Santa Maria della Croce, after she had worn mourning for her husband for a year, as she had promised. She took the veil, as we said, and abandoned the court to its mad passions, as the prophets of old turned their backs upon the accursed cities, and shook their dust from their sandals.

Sancia's retirement was prophetic of evil days to come, and it was not long before the internal dissensions, which had been restrained with great difficulty, broke forth without further attempt at concealment; the storm, which had been rumbling in the distance suddenly burst upon the city, and the lightning was not slow to follow.

On the last day of August, 1344, Joanna did homage for her crown to the legate of Pope Clement VI., Americ, Cardinal of Saint-Martin des Monts; Clement having always looked upon the kingdom of Naples as a fief of the Church, since his predecessors had made donation of it to Charles of Anjou, after excommunicating and dethroning the House of Suabia.

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The Church of Santa-Clara, the burial-place of the Neapolitan kings, where the mortal remains of the young queen's father and grandfather had recently been interred to the right and left of the great altar, was chosen for this solemn ceremonial. Joanna, clad in the royal chlamys, with the crown upon her brow, took the oath of fidelity in the presence of the apostolic legate, while her husband stood behind her as a simple witness, like the other princes of the blood.

Among the prelates, arrayed in their gorgeous robes, who constituted the brilliant suite of the envoy from Avignon, the Archbishops of Pisa, Bari, Capua, and Brundisium, and the reverend fathers Hugolin, Bishop of Castella, and Philip, Bishop of Cavaillon, the queen's chancellor, were particularly noticeable. All the Neapolitan and Hungarian nobility were present at this function, which emphasized in such formal and public fashion Andrew's exclusion from the throne. The consequence was that when they left the church, the excitement of the rival factions reached such a pitch, and hostile glances and threatening words were exchanged with such freedom, that Andrew, feeling that he was too weak to contend against his enemies, wrote the same evening to his mother, declaring his purpose to take his leave of a country where he had met with nothing but deception and misfortune from his childhood up.

They who know the workings of a mother's heart will readily understand that Elizabeth of Poland was no sooner informed of her son's danger than she set out for Naples, and arrived there before anyone suspected that she was on the way. The rumor at once gained currency that the Queen of Hungary had come to take her son away with her, and this unlooked for proceeding caused much wondering comment, while it gave a new

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direction to the feverish turbulence of the public mind. The Empress of Constantinople, Filippa, the Catanian, and her two daughters and all the courtiers, whose schemes would be set at naught by Andrew's sudden departure, outdid themselves by the respectful cordiality of their welcome, with the object of demonstrating to her that the young prince's isolation and bitterness of heart, in the midst of so polished and prepossessing a court, could be due to nothing but the unjust suspicions prompted by his pride, and the natural unsociableness of his character.

Joanna received her husband's mother with so true a sense of her own dignity, that, in spite of her prejudices, Elizabeth could not but admire the high-bred gravity and depth of feeling of her daughter-in-law.

To render her sojourn at Naples more agreeable to the noble stranger, fêtes and tournaments were given for her at which the nobles of the kingdom vied with one another in magnificence and brilliancy. The Empress of Constantinople and Filippa, with Charles of Durazzo and his young wife were particularly assiduous in their attentions to the prince's mother. Maria, whose extreme youth and sweet disposition kept her outside of all intrigue, followed the impulse of her own heart even more than her husband's commands, in pouring out upon the Queen of Hungary all the affectionate consideration she could have shown her own mother. But, notwithstanding these protestations of love and respect, Elizabeth of Poland's motherly instinct made her tremble for her son's welfare, and she persisted in her first intention, feeling that his safety would not be assured until he was far away from that court which hid so much perfidy beneath a polished and benignant exterior.

The person who seemed to feel the greatest consterna-

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tion at this proposed departure, and who used every available means to prevent it, was Brother Robert. Immersed in his political combinations, and working at his mysterious schemes with the desperation of a gambler who holds the winning cards, the Dominican, who believed himself to be on the eve of a great triumph, and that his patient labors and dark plotting were about to put his enemies in his power, and make him the absolute master of the kingdom, suddenly found that his dreams were likely to come to naught, and he made a mighty effort to turn his pupil's mother from her purpose. But fear spoke louder in Elizabeth's heart than all the monk's arguments, and she met them one after another with the same reply; that as her son was not to be king, and to enjoy absolute and unlimited power, it was imprudent to leave him exposed to his enemies.

The minister, seeing that it was a mere waste of time for him to try to overcome her apprehension, limited his request to a delay of three days, at the end of which time, if the reply he expected had not arrived, he not only would make no further opposition to Andrew's departure, but would himself accompany him, and renounce forever a scheme which had cost him so dear.

Towards the end of the third day, as Elizabeth was actively making preparations to leave Naples, the monk entered her apartments with a radiant face, and showed her a letter of which he had just broken the seals hastily.

"God be praised, Madame," he cried triumphantly, "at last I can give you incontestable proofs of my zeal, and of the accuracy of my prevision."

Andrew's mother, after casting her eyes rapidly over the parchment, raised them to the monk's face, still with

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a lingering suspicion, afraid to give way to the joy which filled her heart.

"Yes, Madame," said the monk, raising his head proudly, the ugliness of his features redeemed in a measure by the fire of genius which shone in his eyes; "yes, Madame, you can at least believe your eyes, as you did not choose to put faith in my words; this is not the dream of a too vivid imagination, it is not the self-deception of a too credulous mind, it is not the prejudice of a limited reasoning power; it is a plan, formed with due deliberation, laboriously thought out, and cleverly executed; it is the fruit of my meditation by day and in the watches of the night, the great work of my whole life. I was well aware that your son's cause had powerful enemies at the court of Avignon; but I knew as well that on the day when I should in my prince's behalf bind him by a solemn promise to annul the laws which caused the estrangement between the pope and Robert, who was in all other respects so devoted an adherent of the Church, I knew, I say, that they would not hold out against that inducement, and I held back that proposition as a last resort. You see, Madame, that my reckoning was just, our enemies are put to shame, and your son triumphs."

He turned to Andrew who had that instant come in, and was standing speechless on the threshold, having heard only the last words.

"Come, my child," he said; "our desires are gratified at last, and you are king."

"King!" Andrew repeated, spellbound with joy, doubt and wonder.

"Oh! yes, Monsignore, King of Sicily and Jerusalem! You have no need to read it in this parchment which has brought us intelligence as welcome as it was unhoped

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for; you can see it in your mother's tears, as she opens her arms to clasp you to her heart; you can see it in the joyous transports of your old preceptor, who throws himself at your feet, to salute you with a title which he would have won for you with his blood, if they had persisted much longer in refusing it to you."

"And yet," said Elizabeth after some moments of melancholy reflection, "if I listened to my presentiments, this intelligence would make no change in my purpose to depart."

"No, mother," rejoined Andrew, emphatically, "you surely would not wish me to leave the kingdom to the detriment of my honor. If I have poured into your ears all the bitterness of spirit and chagrin with which my cowardly foes have poisoned my youth, it was not discouragement that drove me to do it, but the sense of my utter powerlessness to wreak a palpable, terrible revenge upon them for their covert insults, their taunting allusions, and their underhanded tricks. It was not that my arm lacked strength, but that my head lacked a crown. I might have crushed some of the villains, the most insolent ones, perhaps, and the least dangerous; but I should have been obliged to strike in the dark and the principal offenders would have escaped me; I could never have pierced the heart of the infernal conspiracy. Therefore have I devoured my indignation and my shame in silence. But now that my sacred rights are recognized by the Church, my dear mother, you will see all these redoubtable nobleman, these advisers of the queen, these self-constituted guardians of the realm, lick the dust from my boots; for now it is no sword which threatens them, no combat on equal terms is proposed to them, nor is it one of their equals who addresses them; no, it is the king who accuses them, it

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is the law which will condemn them, and on the scaffold their punishment will be meted out to them."

"Oh, my beloved son!" cried the queen, weeping, "never have I doubted your nobility of heart, nor the absolute justice of your pretensions; but when your life is in danger, can I listen to any other voice than that of fear, can I give you other advice than that which my love inspires?"

"Believe me, mother, if the hands of these cowardly wretches did not tremble in company with their hearts, you would have had to weep for your son these many months."

"For that reason it is not violence that I dread, but treachery."

"My life belongs to God, as does the life of every man, and the meanest cut-throat may take it at any street corner; but a king owes his life to his people."

The poor mother tried for a long while to change Andrew's determination by dint of argument and entreaty; but when she had exhausted her last argument and shed her last tear, and realized that she must make up her mind to part from him, she summoned to her presence Bertram de Baux, lord justiciary of the kingdom, and Maria, Duchess of Durazzo, and trusting in the wisdom of the old man, and the innocence of the young woman, she commended her son to their care and affection in most tender and touching phrase. Then she took from her finger a richly-wrought ring, and, taking the prince aside, placed it upon his forefinger, and threw her arms about him, saying in a faltering, pathetic voice:

"As you refuse to go with me, my son, take this wonderful talisman, which I am not to make use of until the last extremity. So long as you have this ring on

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your finger, both steel and poison are powerless to injure you."

"You see, mother," replied the prince with a smile; "you surely have no reason to fear for my life when I am thus protected."

"There are other methods of inflicting death than by the use of the sword or poison," sighed the queen.

"Have no fear, mother; the prayers which you will offer up to God in my behalf will be the most potent talisman against danger in every form; my loving memory of your dear face will keep me always in the straight path of duty and justice; and your mother's love will watch over me from afar, and cover me with its wings like a guardian angel."

Elizabeth embraced her son, sobbing bitterly, and when she took her arms from about his neck, it seemed as if her heart would really break. At last she summoned up sufficient resolution to take her departure, and was attended to the point of embarkation by the whole court, who never for a single instant faltered in their chivalrous courtesy and their respectful consideration for her. The poor mother, with pallid cheeks and tottering steps leaned on Andrew's arm to save herself from falling. On board the vessel which was to bear her away from her son forever, she threw herself on his neck for the last time, and so remained for a long while, without word or movement, and dry-eyed; and when the signal for departure was given, her women caught her half-fainting in their arms.

Andrew stood upon the shore, with death at his heart, and his eyes upon the ship which glided swiftly away, bearing all that he loved in the world. Suddenly he fancied that he saw something white waving in the distance; his mother, making a mighty effort to recover

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her faculties, had dragged herself on deck to wave a last farewell to him; she felt sure, poor soul, that she should never see her son again.

Almost coincident with the departure of Andrew's mother, was the demise of the Queen Dowager of Naples, Donna Sancia of Aragon. She was buried at the convent of Santa Maria della Croce, under the name of Claire, which she assumed when she took the vows, as appears by her epitaph, which is couched in these words:

"Here lies, a pattern of exemplary humility, the body of the saintly Sister Claire, of illustrious memory, formerly known as Sancia, Queen of Sicily and Jerusalem, widow of his Most Serene Majesty, Robert, King of Sicily and Jerusalem. After the death of her husband, this queen, having completed her year of widowhood, exchanged the ephemeral pleasures of this earth for joy everlasting, voluntarily adopting a life of poverty for the love of God, after distributing her worldly goods among the poor; she entered this famous convent, which was founded by herself, in the year 1344, the twenty-first day of January of the twelfth indiction; and having led therein a holy life under the direction of the blessed Francesco, father of the poor, she ended her days in the odor of sanctity in the year of our Lord 1345, the twenty-eighth day of July of the thirteenth indiction. On the following day she was interred in this tomb."

Donna Sancia's demise hastened the catastrophe which was to deluge the throne of Naples with blood; it was as if God had chosen to spare that angel of resignation and love, who offered herself to him as a propitiatory sacrifice to atone for the sins of her family, the horrible spectacle which was in preparation.

A week after the funeral of the late queen, Bertrand d'Artois entered Joanna's apartments, pale and dishev-

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eled, and in a state of excitement and perturbation impossible to describe. Joanna rushed to meet him, terrified by his aspect, and questioning him with her eyes as to the cause of his agitation.

"It is as I told you, Madame," cried the count in a passion; "I told you that you would end by ruining us all, you were so obstinate in your refusal to listen to my advice."

"For God's love, Bertrand, speak plainly; what new catastrophe has happened; what advice have I refused to follow?"

"Your noble and excellent husband, Madame, Andrew of Hungary, has been recognized by the papal court of Avignon as King of Jerusalem and Sicily, and henceforth you will be nothing more than his slave."

"You are dreaming, Bertrand."

"I am not dreaming, Madame, and in proof of the exact truth of what I affirm, let me tell you that the papal legates, bearers of the bull decreeing his coronation are already at Capua, and if they do not present themselves at Castel-Nuovo this very evening, it will be simply because they wish to give the new king time to prepare."

The queen hung her head as if lightning had struck at her feet.

"When I told you," pursued the count with increasing rage, "that we must repel force by force, that we must throw off the yoke of that infamous tyranny, and rid ourselves of that man before he secured the means of injuring us, you always recoiled because of a childish dread, a woman's cowardly indecision."

Joanna looked up at her lover, her eyes brimming over with tears.

"My God! my God!" she cried, clasping her hands despairingly, "am I fated to hear this fatal cry of death

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forever ringing in my ears? And you, too, Bertrand, you, too, as well as Roberto di Cabane and Charles of Durazzo, raise the cry! Why, unhappy man, do you desire that a bloody spectre should stand between us to smother our adulterous kisses with his icy hand? Enough of crimes like that! Let him reign if his ambition leads him in that direction; what care I for power, provided that he leaves me your love?"

"It is by no means certain that our love will have a long life."

"What do you mean, Bertrand? You seem to take pleasure in torturing me."

"I mean, Madame, that the new king of Naples has prepared a black flag, and that it will be borne before him on the day of his coronation."

"And do you think," said Joanna, turning as pale as a corpse in its winding sheet, "that this black flag is intended as a threat?"

"Which has already begun to be carried into execution."

The queen tottered and leaned against a table to keep from falling.

"Tell me everything," she said in a suffocated voice, "do not fear to alarm me; see, I tremble not. Oh! Bertrand, I implore you!"

"The traitors have begun with the man whom you esteem most highly, the most sagacious adviser of the crown, the most upright magistrate, the noblest heart, the most austere virtue——"

"Andrew of Isernia?"

"He is no more, Madame."

Joanna uttered a piercing shriek, as if the old man, whom she revered as a father, had been slain before her eyes; then she collapsed, and for some time made not a sound.

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"How did they kill him?" she asked at length, fixing her great, startled eyes upon the count's face.

"Last evening, as he was on his way home after leaving the castle, a man suddenly appeared in front of him, near the Petrucia gate. This man was one of Andrew's favorites, Conrad of Gottes, who was selected, doubtless, because he had a grievance of his own against the incorruptible magistrate on account of a decree he had rendered against him, so that the murder would be attributed to personal vengeance. The cowardly villain signaled to two or three of his comrades who surrounded their victim, and left him no way of escape. The unfortunate old man looked his assassin in the eye and asked him calmly what he wanted with him.

"'I want you to lose your life, even as you made me lose my suit,' cried the villain; and without giving him time to say a word in reply, he ran him through with his sword. Thereupon the others threw themselves upon the poor wretch, who did not even attempt to cry for help, and they fairly covered his body with wounds, mutilating it frightfully, and left it weltering in its blood."

"Horror of horrors!" muttered the queen, covering her face with her hands.

"This is simply their maiden attempt, for the lists of proscribed are already full; Andrew must have oceans of blood to commemorate his accession to the throne of Naples. Can you guess, Joanna, whose name stands at the head of the condemned?"

"Whose?" asked the queen, shivering from head to foot.

"Mine," replied the count, in a careless tone.

"Yours!" cried Joanna, rising to her full height; "they propose to massacre you now? Oh! Andrew, look to yourself; you are pronouncing your own sentence

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of death. For a long while I have turned aside the dagger which was aimed at your breast; but you have tried my patience too far. Woe to thee, Prince of Hungary! the blood thou hast shed will fall back upon thine own head!"

As she spoke her pallor disappeared, her lovely face glowed with burning thoughts of vengeance, and her eyes shot fire. This child of sixteen was terrible to look upon; she grasped her lover's hand with convulsive tenderness, and clung to his side as if she would shield him from harm with her body.

"Your indignation comes a little late," said the count, in a sad, gentle voice; for Joanna at that moment was so beautiful in his eyes that he had not the heart to speak to her reproachfully. "Have you not been told that his mother left him a talisman which ensures him immunity from poison and the dagger?"

"He shall die," replied Joanna in a voice that did not falter; and the smile which played over her features was of such peculiar meaning that the count lowered his eyes, startled at what he saw.

The next day, the young Queen of Naples, lovelier and more smiling than ever, sat by a window, which commanded a beautiful view of the glorious bay, artlessly weaving a cord of silk and gold thread. The sun, having nearly completed his flaming journey, was slowly descending into the clear, blue waters, wherein the flower and grass-crowned peak of Pausilippo was reflected. A soft, balmy breeze, having breathed in passing upon the orange groves of Sorrento and Amalfi, fanned with its refreshing coolness the inhabitants of the capital, sunk in voluptuous indolence. The whole city awoke from its long siesta, breathing deep of the fragrant air, and raising its slumber-laden eyelids. The Mole was thronged

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with a vast, noisy crowd, a wilderness of bright color; joyous shouts and songs of love and gallantry arose on every side of this vast amphitheatre, which is one of the greatest marvels in all creation, and fell upon Joanna's ears.

She was listening vaguely to them, bending over her work, and deep in thought, when suddenly the almost inaudible sound of restrained breathing, and the imperceptible rustling of cloth which seemed to graze her shoulder, made her start convulsively. She turned as if suddenly awakened by the touch of a serpent, and saw her husband, gorgeously arrayed, leaning carelessly on the back of her chair. It was a long, long time since the prince had visited his wife in such familiar fashion, so that this manifestation of affection and unconstraint seemed to her of ill augury. Andrew did not seem to remark the look of hatred and alarm which his wife involuntarily cast upon him; he imparted to his impassive, regular features as benignant an expression as he could command under the circumstances, and asked with a smile:

"For what purpose are you making that cord, my dear, faithful wife?"

"To hang you with, Monsignore," replied the queen, smiling back at him.

Andrew shrugged his shoulders, seeing nothing more than a rather vulgar joke in her unparalleled rashness. As Joanna resumed her work, he tried to continue the conversation.

"I confess," he continued with perfect tranquillity, "that my question was unnecessary, to say the least; I might have guessed from your evident haste to complete this superb piece of work, that it is destined for some gallant knight, whom you purpose to send upon some

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dangerous mission under the safeguard of your colors. If that be so, my fair sovereign, I demand that you tell me the time and place of the competition; I am sure beforehand of my ability to carry off the prize which I will contend for against all your adorers."

"That is by no means certain," retorted Joanna, "if your fortune is no greater in war than in love;" and she darted a glance of such contemptuous meaning at her husband, that he blushed to the roots of his hair.

"I hope soon to give you such incontestable proof of my love," he rejoined, restraining his wrath, "that you will find it impossible to doubt it henceforth."

"What causes you to cherish that hope, may I ask, Monsignore?"

"I would tell you, if I were sure that you would listen seriously."

"I will do so."

"Very well; my great confidence is due to a dream I had last night."

"A dream! that calls for some further explanation."

"I dreamed that there was a great festival in the city; an immense crowd filled the streets, like a torrent overflowing its banks, and made the welkin ring with joyous shouts; the gloomy façades of marble and granite were hid from sight by silken hangings and garlands of flowers, and the churches were decorated as if for some great feast. I was riding by your side—" At this point Joanna made a proud gesture of dissent. "Pardon me, Madame; it was but a dream. I was riding at your right side, on a beautiful white horse, magnificently caparisoned, and the lord justiciary walked in front of me, carrying a waving flag, to do me honor. After a triumphant progress through the principal streets of the city we entered the royal church of Santa-Clara, to the

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sound of trumpets and clarions, and there, where your grandfather and my uncle lie buried, the papal legate, standing before the high altar, placed your hand in mine, and after a long discourse, placed the crown of Jerusalem and Sicily upon our heads in turn; whereupon the nobles and the people cried with one voice: 'Long live the King and Queen of Naples!' And I, wishing to perpetuate the memory of so glorious a day, caused the honors of knighthood to be conferred on the most zealous courtiers."

"Do you not recall the names of those fortunate ones whom you deemed worthy of the royal favor?"

"Yes, indeed, Madame, yes, indeed: Bertrand d'Artois——"

"Enough, Monsignore; I spare you the task of naming the others. I always believed you to be a magnanimous, loyal-hearted nobleman, but you have given me fresh proof of your greatness of heart by bestowing your favor upon those persons whom I most delight to honor with my confidence. I cannot say whether your dream is soon to be fulfilled, but in any event, be assured of my everlasting gratitude."

Joanna's voice did not betray the slightest emotion, her glance became almost affectionate, and the sweetest of smiles played about her lips. But from that moment Andrew's death was irrevocably resolved upon in her heart. The prince was too deeply engrossed in his own revengeful projects, and too confident of the power of his talisman and of his personal courage, to suspect that he might be outwitted. He talked for a long while with his wife upon a footing of almost playful friendliness, trying to ferret out her secrets, and betraying his own by fragmenting phrases, and mysterious reticence. When he thought that he could see that the last vestige of her

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former antipathy had vanished from Joanna's heart, he begged her to bear him company, with her suite, on a magnificent hunting-party which was in contemplation for the twentieth of August, adding that compliance on her part with his request would be the most convincing of all pledges of their complete reconciliation and of her willingness to forget the past. Joanna promised with charming alacrity, and the prince withdrew, perfectly content with the result of the interview, and firm in the conviction that he had but to strike down the queen's favorites to secure her obedience, and perhaps win her love even yet.

But a strange and awful scene took place at the foot of one of the side towers of Castel-Nuovo on the eve of the twentieth of August. Charles of Durazzo, who had not ceased to nourish in secret his infernal scheme, was warned by the notary whom he had employed to keep watch of the progress of the conspiracy, that there was to be a decisive meeting of the conspirators on that evening. He wrapped himself in a black cloak, stole down into a subterranean corridor, and concealed himself behind a pillar to await the issue of the conference. After two hours of anxious expectation, every second of which was marked by a tumultuous heart-throb, Charles thought that he detected a sound as of a door being opened with the utmost precaution; a faint beam escaping through a cleft in the shutter of a lantern, flickered among the arches, without casting any light, and a man, stepping out from the wall, walked towards him like a living bas-relief. Charles coughed slightly; it was the preconcerted signal, and the newcomer at once extinguished his light, and put away the dagger he had drawn to guard against surprise.

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"Is it you, Master Nicolas?" the duke asked, beneath his breath.

"Myself, Monsignore."

"Well, what have you to report?"

"It is decided that the prince shall be murdered tomorrow, on his way to the hunt."

"Did you recognize all the conspirators?"

"All, although their features were concealed by masks; when they gave in their votes for death, I recognized their voices."

"Can you name them to me?"

"This very moment; they will pass by the end of this corridor; and see, there is Tommaso Pace walking ahead of the others to light them."

As he spoke, a tall spectre, clothed in black from head to foot, with his face carefully hidden by a velvet mask, appeared at the end of the passageway, torch in hand, and stopped on the lowest step of a winding staircase leading to the upper regions. The conspirators came slowly along, two by two, like a procession of spectres, passed through the circle of light cast by the torch, and disappeared in the shadow.

"There are Charles and Bertrand d'Artois," said the notary; "the next are the Counts of Terlizzi and Catanzaro; then the grand-admiral and grand-seneschal, Godfrey di Marsan, Count of Squillace, and Roberto di Cabane, Count of Eboli; those two women talking together and gesticulating so vehemently are Catherine of Tarento, Empress of Constantinople, and Filippa the Catanian, the queen's governess and first lady-in-waiting; then come Donna Cancia, Joanna's confidential maid, and the Countess of Morcone ——."

The notary stopped as a figure appeared, walking all alone, with drooping head, arms hanging by her side,

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and stifling her sobs in the folds of a capacious black hood.

"Who is that woman who seems to have such difficulty in dragging herself along in the wake of the doleful procession?" queried the duke, pressing his companion's arm.

"That woman!" whispered the notary, "is the queen!"

"Ah! I have her now!" thought Charles, drawing a long breath, with the deep satisfaction which Satan must feel when a soul he has long coveted at last falls into his power.

"And now, Monsignore," said Master Nicolas, when darkness and silence had resumed their sway, "if your purpose in commanding me to spy upon the proceedings of the conspirators, was to save the young prince, in whose behalf you are so vigilant, hasten to warn him, for to-morrow it may be too late."

"Follow me," cried the duke, imperiously; "it is time that you should know my real purpose, so that you may execute my orders with the most scrupulous precision."

With that he led him away in a direction opposite to that in which the conspirators had disappeared. The notary was following him mechanically through a labyrinth of dark corridors and secret stairways, quite at a loss to explain the sudden change which seemed to have come over his master's mind, when they unexpectedly fell in with Andrew, in one of the antechambers of the castle. He greeted them joyfully, and grasped the hand of his cousin, Durazzo, with his customary friendliness, as he asked him with a warmth which seemed to admit of no refusal:

"Well, Duke, you will join us to-morrow of course?"

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"Pardon me, Monsignore," replied Charles, bowing to the ground; "it is impossible for me to hunt with you, for my wife is quite ill; but I beg you to accept my best falcon."

As he spoke he gave the notary a look which nailed him to his place.

The morning of the twentieth of August dawned calm and beautiful, designed by nature, in one of her sarcastic moods, as a sharp contrast to the evil passions of mankind. From the break of day, masters and valets, knights and pages, princes and courtiers, all the world, in short, was on foot. Joyous shouts arose on every side when the queen appeared, mounted upon a snow-white palfrey, at the head of the gorgeous train of magnificently equipped youth of both sexes. She was perhaps a little paler than usual; but her pallor was easily attributable to her having been obliged to rise at an extraordinarily early hour.

Andrew, astride one of the most mettlesome horses he had ever subdued in his life, pranced and curvetted at his wife's side, with proud mien, happy in his strength, happy in his youth, happy in the thousand golden hopes which made his future appear in the most roseate colors.

Never had the Neapolitan court made a more splendid display; every feeling of hatred and distrust seemed completely forgotten, and even Brother Robert, the embodiment of suspicion, smoothed the wrinkles from his careworn brow, and proudly stroked his beard as he watched the gay cavalcade pass beneath his window.

It was Andrew's purpose to pass several days hunting between Capua and Aversa, and to delay his return to Naples until everything should be ready for his coronation. Consequently they hunted near Melito the first day and passed through two or three villages of the

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Terra di Laboro. Towards evening they halted at Aversa to pass the night there, and as there was no castle in the town suitable for the entertainment of the queen and her husband with their numerous following, the convent of San Pietro, built by Charles II. in 1309, was transformed into a royal residence for the occasion.

While the grand-seneschal was giving orders for supper, and attending to the hasty preparation of an apartment for Andrew and his wife, the prince, who had indulged his passion for hunting throughout the day with youthful ardor, although the heat was intense, went out upon the terrace to enjoy the evening breeze, accompanied by Isolda, his beloved nurse, who was even more attached to him than his mother, and never voluntarily left his side for a moment.

He had seldom seemed so light-hearted and so happy; he went into ecstasies over the beauty of the landscape, the magnificent weather, and the sweet odors which arose from the fields; he plied his nurse with a thousand questions, without waiting for her replies, which came but slowly, for poor Isolda was gazing at him with that air of rapt contemplation, which makes a mother seem so distraught when listening to her child. While he was telling her with great earnestness about a terrible boar which he had chased through the forest that morning, and had finally stretched foaming at his feet, Isolda interrupted him to say that there was a speck of dust in the corner of his eye. Again, while Andrew was dilating to her upon his plans for the future, she stroked his beautiful, chestnut locks and observed that he must be exceedingly weary. At last, the young prince, alive to nothing but his dreams of power and glory, defied destiny, and called aloud upon dangers of every kind to come on, that he might surmount

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them; whereupon the poor nurse exclaimed through her tears:

"You no longer love me, my child!"

Annoyed by her continual interruptions, Andrew gently reproved her, and laughed at her puerile fears. Then, without seeking to resist a wave of melancholy tenderness which stole insensibly over him, he made her tell him a thousand incidents of his childhood, talked to her a long while of his brother Louis and his absent mother, and his eyes filled with tears as he remembered her last farewell. Isolda listened to him with rapture, and replied naturally to all his questions; but no presentiment cast its shadow upon her heart, for the poor woman loved with all her soul, she would have given her life on earth, and her hopes of heaven for him, but she was not his mother!

When everything was ready Roberto di Cabane came to say to the prince that the queen was awaiting him; Andrew cast a last lingering glance upon the laughing landscape, over which night was just drawing her starry veil, put his nurse's hand to his lips and pressed it against his heart, then followed the grand-seneschal slowly and almost regretfully. But ere long the brilliantly lighted hall, the wine, which flowed in rivers, the sparkling conversation, and the noisy boasting of the day's exploits drove away the cloud of sadness which had darkened the prince's brow for an instant. The queen alone, with her elbows on the table, her eyes staring into space, and her lips glued together, sat at the festive board, as pale and cold as a spectre risen from the dead to cast a pall upon the enjoyment of the guests.

Andrew, whose wits began to be submerged in copious libations of the vintage of Capri and Syracuse, was offended at his wife's expression which he attributed to

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disdain; he filled a glass to the brim, and offered it to her.

Joanna trembled like a leaf, and her lips moved convulsively, but the conspirators drowned with their noisy exclamations the involuntary groan which escaped her. Amid the general tumult, Roberto di Cabane suggested that the same wines which were served at the royal table should be supplied without stint to the Hungarian guards who were on duty around the convent, and this lavish liberality aroused frantic applause. Soon the shouts of the soldiers, bearing witness to their appreciation of such unexpected generosity, were mingled with the acclamations of the guests. To put the finishing touch to the prince's infatuation, cries of, "Long live the queen! Long live his Majesty, the King of Naples!" were raised on both sides.

The orgies were prolonged until the night was far advanced; there was much enthusiastic anticipation of the next day's sport, and Bertrand d'Artois remarked that after such a riotous night everybody might not be on hand betimes in the morning. Thereupon Andrew declared that so far as he was concerned, an hour or two of repose would suffice to restore him completely, and that he had strong hopes that his example would not lack imitators. The Count of Terlizzi ventured to express, with all respect, some doubt as to the prince's punctuality. Andrew cried out at the insinuation, and having challenged all the nobles present to be more punctual than he, withdrew with the queen to the apartment reserved for them, where he was soon sleeping a deep, heavy sleep.

About two in the morning, Tommaso Pace, Andrew's valet, and first usher of the royal apartments, knocked at his master's door to awaken him for the hunt. To

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the first knock there was no reply; at the second, Joanna, who had not closed her eyes during the night, made a movement as if to arouse her husband and warn him of the danger by which he was threatened; at the third, the prince awoke with a start, and hearing laughing and whispering in the adjoining room supposed that they were joking about his laziness; he leaped out of bed, with no clothing but his shirt, and opened the door.

From this point we transcribe literally the narrative of Domenico Gravina, one of the most trustworthy chroniclers.

"As soon as the prince made his appearance the conspirators threw themselves upon him in a body, with the intention of strangling him with their hands, for he could not be put to death by the sword or by poison, because of a ring given him by his poor mother. But Andrew, who was strong and active, defended himself with superhuman vigor when he realized the infamous treachery of which he was a victim; he shrieked with rage and pain, and broke loose from the assassins, with bleeding face, and with handfuls of his yellow locks torn out by the roots. The unfortunate youth tried to return to his room to secure a weapon and resist the assassins as best he could; but when he reached the door Master Nicolas di Melazzo thrust his dagger through the staples of the lock, like a bolt, and prevented him from passing through The prince, still shouting at the top of his voice, calling imploringly upon his retainers for succor, turned back into the hall; but all the doors were closed, and not a soul held out a helping hand. The queen held her peace, and showed not the least concern for her husband's peril.

"Meanwhile Isolda, the nurse, awakened by the shrieks of her dear child and master, leaped out of bed and ran

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to the window, filling the whole building with her cries of terror. The traitors, alarmed by the great uproar, although the convent was in a lonely spot and so far from the centre of the town that no one was likely to notice the noise, were already preparing to release their victim, when Bertrand d'Artois, feeling that he was more guilty than the others, and with the rage of hell in his heart, seized the prince around the waist, and threw him down after a desperate struggle. Then he dragged him by the hair to the balcony overlooking the gardens, and cried, with one knee on his breast:

"'Help, Barons! I have all that we need to strangle him.'

"He passed a long cord of silk and gold around his neck, while the poor wretch struggled with all his strength; but Bertrand quickly tied the knot, and the others threw the body over the rail of the balcony, and left it hanging there between heaven and earth until death ensued. As the Count of Terlizzi turned his eyes away in horror from the sight of that frightful death agony, Roberto di Cabane cried imperiously:

"'What are you doing, my good brother-in-law? the cord is long enough for all of us to take hold; we need accomplices, not mere witnesses.'

"As soon as the convulsive movements of the body came to an end, they let it fall to the ground from the third floor, and opened the doors and went their several ways, as if nothing had happened.

"Isolda, having succeeded at last in procuring a light, ran at full speed to the queen's room, and finding the door closed, began to call her son at the top of her voice. There was no response, and still the queen was within. The poor nurse, trembling with apprehension, ran through all the corridors, knocked at all the cell-doors, and awoke

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JOANNA OF NAPLES

Andrew of Hungary, first husband of Joanna, strangled by Bertrand d'Artois.

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the monks one after another, imploring them to join her in searching for the prince. The monks replied that they had heard a great noise, but supposed that it was caused by drunken or insubordinate soldiers, and did not deem it their duty to interfere. Isolda persisted in her earnest entreaties; the alarm spread throughout the convent, and the monks followed the nurse, who held a lighted torch. She entered the garden, spied something white upon the grass, approached it tremblingly, uttered a piercing shriek, and fell to the ground.

"The ill-fated Andrew lay weltering in his blood, with a rope around his neck like a common malefactor, and with his head crushed by the fall from so great a height.

"Thereupon two monks went up to the queen's apartment, knocked respectfully at the door, and asked in sepulchral tones:

"'Madame, what is it your pleasure that we should do with your husband's body?'

"As the queen made no reply, they went slowly back to the garden, and kneeling, one at the head and the other at the feet of the body, began to repeat the penitential psalms. When they had prayed an hour there, two other monks went up to Joanna's door, and having repeated the same question without eliciting any response, they relieved the first two and prayed in their turn. Again two others presented themselves at that inexorable door, and as they turned away in dismay at the failure of their attempt, the people were beginning to assemble around the convent, and whispers of murder were passing from mouth to mouth throughout the multitude. The crowd was becoming momentarily more compact, the voices were taking on a more menacing tone, and the torrent threatened to invade the royal abode, when the queen's guard appeared with lances at rest, and a tightly closed

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litter, surrounded by the principal noblemen of the court, passed through the awe-struck mob. Joanna enveloped in a black veil, returned to Castel-Nuovo, with her escort, and no one—so say the historians—ventured to speak of Andrew's death thereafter."

But the terrible role which Charles of Durazzo had laid out for himself was to begin as soon as the crime was consummated. For two days the body of the man whose coronation as King of Sicily and Jerusalem had been ordered by the pope, was left exposed to wind and rain, unburied, and unhonored, to the end that the lamentable sight might increase the public indignation. On the third day the Duke of Durazzo caused it to be transported with great pomp to the Cathedral of Naples, where he gathered all the Hungarians about the catafalque, and cried in a voice of thunder:

"Nobles and commoners, here lies our king, done to death by the infamous treachery of cowardly dastards! God will soon put in our hands the names of all the culprits. Let those who desire that justice be done raise their hands, and make a vow of pitiless retaliation, implacable hatred, and insatiable revenge upon the murderers!"

Then there arose from the assemblage a single cry which carried despair and death to the hearts of the conspirators, and the people scattered through the city, shouting "Vengeance!"

Divine justice, which recognizes no privileges, and does not hesitate at sight of a crown, struck at Joanna in her love first of all. When the lovers met for the first time they instinctively shrank back, each with a horrified feeling at the sight of the other, the queen seeing in him only her husband's executioner, and he seeing in the queen naught but the cause of his crime and of its

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impending punishment. Bertrand's features were contorted beyond recognition, his cheeks wrinkled, his eyes marked by dark circles, his mouth twisted out of shape; and as he stood with outstretched arm, pointing his finger at his accomplice, a frightful vision rose before him. He seemed to see the self-same cord with which he had strangled Andrew, around the queen's neck, and knotted so tight that it sank into the flesh, and an invisible force, an inspiration of the devil impelled him, Bertrand, to strangle with his own hands this woman whom he had loved so dearly, and before whom he used formerly to kneel in adoration. He rushed from the room, waving his arms wildly in his despair, and uttering incoherent words; and as he showed signs of something very like madness, his father, Charles d'Artois, took him away with him; that same evening they set out for their estate at Saint-Agatha and fortified themselves there, to be ready for a possible attack.

But Joanna's punishment, a frightful, lingering punishment, which was to last thirty-seven years, and end in a frightful death, was but beginning. All the wretches who had taken a hand in Andrew's death came forward in turn to demand their blood-money. Filippa, the Catanian, and her son, who now held not the queen's honor alone, but her very life, in their hands, put no bounds to their extortionate greed; Donna Cancia indulged her passion for debauchery to its fullest extent, and the Empress of Constantinople called upon her niece to marry her son Robert, Prince of Tarento.

Joanna, devoured by remorse and indignation, humiliated by the arrogance of her subjects, and overwhelmed with shame, did not dare to hold her head erect; she descended to entreaties, but asked for nothing more than a few days' delay. The empress gave her consent on

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condition that her son should take up his abode at Castel-Nuovo, and be allowed to see the queen once a day; Joanna bent her head without speaking, and Robert of Tarento was installed at the castle.

Charles of Durazzo, who by Andrew's death had become almost the head of the family, and, in accordance with the late king's will, would inherit the crown in right of his wife, if Joanna should die without heirs of her body, intimated to the queen two points in which he expected his orders to be obeyed: in the first place, she was not to think of contracting a second marriage without consulting him as to her choice of a husband; in the second place, she was to bestow the title of Duke of Calabria upon him without loss of time. The better to prevail upon his cousin to make this twofold concession, he added, that if she should be so ill-advised as to refuse to comply with either of these *requests* he would place the proofs of the crime and the names of the culprits in the hands of the authorities.

Joanna cowered under this latest blow, and did not find it expedient to seek to avert it; but Catherine of Tarento, the only one who was competent to contend against her nephew, declared that his ambition and his hopes must be shattered by telling him, in the first place, that the queen was *enceinte*, which was the fact; and if, notwithstanding that information, he persisted in his schemes, she would then take it upon herself to find some way of sowing discord and confusion in her nephew's family, of wounding him in his affections and in the interests which he had most at heart, of dishonoring him publicly in the persons of his wife and his mother.

Charles smiled coldly when his aunt informed him, on the queen's behalf, that she was about to bring into the world a child of which Andrew was the father. Indeed,

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what possible importance could attach to an unborn child in the eyes of a man who could with such marvelous self-possession make use of his own enemies to rid himself of those persons who stood in the way of his plans? He told the empress that the good news which she deigned to announce to him with her own mouth, instead of lessening his indulgent feeling for his cousin, led him to emphasize it, and to show his interest in her welfare even more strikingly; and therefore he would renew his proposition, and his promise not to carry out his purpose of avenging his dear Andrew, inasmuch as the crime was not altogether consummated if he left a child behind him. But if she should refuse to accept his terms, he should be inflexible. He cleverly hinted to Catherine that as she was deeply involved in the prince's death, it would be well for her, on her own account, to induce the queen to prevent the prosecution.

The empress seemed deeply impressed by her nephew's threatening attitude, and promised to do her utmost to persuade the queen to accede to all his demands, on condition that Charles should give her sufficient time to carry through so delicate a negotiation. But she took advantage of the delay which she succeeded in wresting from the ambitious duke, to concoct her own schemes of vengeance, and to make sure of their infallible success. After regretfully abandoning as impracticable several plans which she had welcomed with avidity, she at last decided upon an infernal, unparalleled artifice, which the mind would refuse to credit were it not unanimously attested by all the contemporary chroniclers.

Poor Agnes of Durazzo had been suffering for some days from a mysterious sort of depression; it may well be that the restless and turbulent character of her son was not the least cause of her lingering, distressing

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illness. This unhappy mother was selected by the empress as the first victim of her resentment. She sent for the Count of Terlizzi and his mistress, Donna Cancia; the latter, who was then *enceinte*, had been in attendance upon Agnes, by command of the queen, during her illness, and Catherine prevailed upon her to substitute her water for the invalid's, so that the physician, deceived by that symptom, would be compelled to disclose to Charles of Durazzo his mother's dishonor. Terlizzi, who had been in mortal terror, ever since the king's murder, of being denounced for his share therein, had no objections to urge to carrying out the wishes of the empress, and Donna Cancia, whose head was as light as her heart was corrupt, welcomed with great glee the opportunity to take her revenge upon a princess of the blood, who was enough of a prude to set up a claim to virtue in a court renowned for its depravity. Once assured of the consent and discretion of her instruments, Catherine put in circulation vague and indefinite rumors, which were of a terribly serious nature if confirmed by proofs; and soon after they were put forth they were whispered in confidence from mouth to mouth until they came to the ears of Charles of Durazzo.

The duke shook as with the ague at this astounding accusation, and immediately sent for the physician, and asked him imperiously what the cause was of his mother's sickness. The doctor turned pale and stammered out some unintelligible reply, but confessed at last, under due threats from Charles, that he had suspicions amounting almost to certainty that the duchess was with child, but that he might possibly be mistaken, and so ask leave to make a second examination before giving a definite opinion. The next day the moment he stepped out of Agnes' room, the duke met him, and having questioned

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him by an agonized gesture, interpreted his silence to mean that his fears were only too well founded. However, the doctor, to take every possible precaution, declared that he desired to make a third trial. The damned know no more interminable hours than those which Charles passed until the fatal moment when he became absolutely certain that his mother was guilty. On the third day the doctor declared on his soul and conscience that Agnes of Durazzo was *enceinte*.

"Very well," said Charles, dismissing the doctor without manifesting any emotion.

That evening a remedy said to have been ordered by the physician was administered to the duchess, and as she was attacked by excruciating pains a half hour later, it was suggested to the duke that it might be well to consult other physicians, as the prescription of the one in attendance had caused a decided change for the worse, instead of for the better, in the invalid's condition.

Charles went slowly up to his mother's apartment, sent away all those who were about her bed on the pretext that their awkwardness annoyed the invalid so that her suffering was increased tenfold, and shut himself up alone with her. Poor Agnes, forgetting the torture which was tearing her to pieces, when her eyes fell upon her son, pressed his hand affectionately, and smiled through her tears.

Charles' forehead was bathed in a cold sweat, his swarthy complexion assumed a sickly yellow tinge, and his eyeballs were frightfully dilated, as he bent over the invalid, and asked in a dull voice:

"Well, mother, you are somewhat better, I trust?"

"Oh! I am in such terrible pain, my poor Charles! I feel as if molten lead were flowing in my veins. O

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my son! send for your brothers, that I may give them my last blessing, for I cannot long endure such agony as this. I am burning up; oh! in mercy's name, send quickly for a physician; I am poisoned!"

Charles did not stir from her pillow.

"Water!" exclaimed the dying woman in a broken voice, "water—a doctor—a confessor—my children—I must see my children!"

The duke stood impassively by in gloomy silence, and the poor mother, thinking that grief had deprived him of all power of speech or movement, rose to a sitting posture with a desperate effort, although terribly weakened by her suffering, and shook him by the arm, crying with as much strength as she could summon to her aid:

"Charles, my son! what is it my poor child? Take heart; this will amount to nothing, I hope; but call help quickly! send for my physician! Oh! you cannot conceive what agony I am suffering."

"Your physician," Charles replied in slow, cold tones, whose every word sank into his mother's heart like the stroke of a dagger; "your physician cannot come."

"Why not?" demanded Agnes, in amazement.

"Because the man who possessed the secret of our dishonor had lived too long."

"Guilty wretch!" cried the dying woman in a paroxysm of terror and grief, "you have murdered him! it may be that you have poisoned your mother! Oh, Charles! Charles! the Lord have mercy on your soul."

"You chose that it should be," replied Charles in a dull voice; "you are the one who drove me to despair and crime; you are the cause of my dishonor in this world, and of my perdition in the next."

"What are you saying? Oh! my Charles, in pity's

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name, do not let me die in this terrible uncertainty. What fatal delusion has blinded you? Speak, my son, speak! I no longer feel the poison which is consuming me. What have I done to you? of what am I accused?"

She gazed at her son with haggard eyes, in which her mother's love was still struggling against the atrocious thought of parricide; and when Charles remained dumb notwithstanding her entreaties, she repeated in heart-rending accents:

"Speak! in heaven's name, speak, before I die!"

"You are *enceinte*, mother."

"I!" shrieked Agnes with a force which almost rent her asunder. "Oh, God, forgive him! Charles, your mother forgives you, and blesses you with her dying breath."

Charles threw his arms around her neck, crying for help with the energy of despair; he would have been glad then to save her life at the cost of his own, but it was too late. He uttered a cry which came from the very bottom of his heart, and they found him lying across his mother's dead body.

Strange conjectures were put forward at court, apropos of the death of the Duchess of Durazzo, and the disappearance of her physician; but one point concerning which there was no possibility of question was the brooding melancholy which furrowed deeper wrinkles upon Charles' none too cheerful brow, Catherine alone understood the tragic element in her nephew's grief, for it was evident to her, but to nobody else, that he had killed the physician and poisoned his mother at one fell swoop. She did not, however, look for so sudden and violent a reaction in the heart of a man who never hesitated at any crime. She believed Charles to be capable

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of everything except remorse. His absorbed and forbidding melancholy seemed to her of ill augury for her plans. Her purpose had been to keep his mind so engrossed with domestic infelicities, that he would have no time to oppose her son's marriage to the queen; but she had gone farther than she intended, and Charles, now that he had taken such a fearful step in the dark pathway of crime, and had severed the most sacred of all bonds, would probably devote himself to the gratification of his evil passions with feverish ardor, and a bitter longing for revenge.

Catherine consequently adopted a gentle and submissive demeanor. She impressed upon her son that there was but one way for him to obtain the queen's hand, and that was by flattering Charles' ambition, and putting himself in a way under his patronage. Robert of Tarento grasped his position, and ceased to pay his court to Joanna, who received his attentions with good-natured indifference, to hang upon his cousin Charles' footsteps. He showed him the same degree of deference and respect with which Charles had favored Andrew when he was bent upon his destruction. But Charles did not allow himself to be taken in by the friendship and devotion manifested toward him by the head of the family of Tarento, and while pretending to be deeply touched by his unexpected conversion, he was very guarded about meeting his advances.

An occurrence which no human being could have foreseen upset all the calculations of both cousins. One day while they were riding out together on horseback, as they had often done since their pseudo reconciliation, Louis of Tarento, Robert's youngest brother, who had always loved Joanna, with that chivalrous, devoted love which one keeps hidden as a priceless treasure in

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JOANNA OF NAPLES

Remorse of Charles, Duke of Durazzo, for having poisoned his mother.

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the bottom of one's heart, when one is twenty years old, and as beautiful as any angel—Louis, we say, who had held aloof from the shameful conspiracy of his family, and had not dipped his hands in Andrew's blood, suddenly presented himself at Castel-Nuovo, under the impulse of violent passion. While his brother was wasting precious moments trying to negotiate his marriage with the queen, Louis ordered the drawbridge raised, and gave the strictest orders to lower it for nobody. Then, without pausing to consider the probable anger of Charles and jealousy of Robert, he rushed to the queen's apartment, and, as Domenico Gravina informs us, consummated his own marriage without ceremony.

Robert, on returning from his ride, was amazed to find that the drawbridge was not lowered without question to admit him, and called in thundering tones upon the soldiers who were on duty, threatening them with condign punishment for their unpardonable negligence. But as the gates of the castle remained closed, and the soldiers gave no sign of fear or repentance, the prince flew into a frightful rage, and swore that the wretches who kept him out of his own abode should be hanged like dogs.

Meanwhile the Empress of Constantinople, terrified at the imminence of a bloody affray between the two brothers, went out alone and on foot to meet her son, and used her maternal ascendancy to induce him to restrain his transports of fury before the crowd which had already assembled to witness the curious sight; she then told him in an undertone what had taken place during his absence.

A roar like that of a wounded tiger escaped from Robert's breast, and he was so blinded by his mad rage that he came very near crushing his mother beneath the hoofs of his horse, which seemed to share his master's

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excitement, and reared viciously with flaming nostrils. When he had poured out all the curses he had at his command upon his brother's head, he rode away at a gallop from the accursed castle, and flew to Charles of Durazzo, from whom he had but just parted, to inform him of the outrage and spur him on to be revenged.

Charles was talking carelessly with his young wife, who was little accustomed to such amiable conversation, or such affectionate familiarity from him, when the Prince of Tarento gasping for breath, and drenched with perspiration, broke in upon them, and told his incredible tale. Charles made him repeat it twice, so utterly impossible did Louis' audacious exploit seem to him. Then he passed without warning from doubt to blind rage, and striking his forehead with his iron gauntlet, he exclaimed that since the queen chose to defy him, he would find a way to make her tremble in the heart of her castle, and in her lover's arms; and with a withering glance at Maria, who implored him tearfully to be merciful to her sister, he grasped Robert's hand warmly, and promised him that Louis should not be Joanna's husband while he lived.

That same evening he dispatched letters to the court of Avignon, the effects of which were speedily apparent. A bull, dated June 2, 1346, was addressed to Bertram de Baux, Count of Monte-Scaglioso, lord justiciary of the Kingdom of Sicily, directing him to proceed at once with the utmost rigor against Andrew's murderers, against whom the pope launched his anathema at the same time, and to punish them according to the letter of the law. There was, however, a secret note sent with the bull, which ran directly counter to Charles' designs; for the sovereign pontiff expressly enjoined upon the

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lord justiciary by no means to allow the queen or the princes of the blood to be implicated, as such implication might give rise to more serious trouble; he reserved to himself, as supreme head of the Church, and suzerain of the kingdom, the right to proceed against them later if he thought best.

Bertram de Baux made preparations on a grand scale for this noteworthy proceeding. A platform was erected in the great court-room, and all the great officers of the crown, all the great dignitaries of the state, and all the principal nobles of the kingdom, sat thereon behind the magistrates' enclosure.

Three days after the bull of Clement VI. was promulgated in Naples, the lord justiciary was able to proceed to the public examination of two of the accused. These two, the first upon whom the hands of the law were laid, were, as may be imagined, those of the lowest station, and whose lives were consequently held of the least value—Tommaso Pace, and Master Nicolas di Melazzo. They were taken before the tribunal to be subjected to the preliminary torture, according to custom. The notary happened to pass near Charles in the street on his way thither, and found time to say in his ear:

"Monsignore, the time has come for me to lay down my life for you, and I shall do my duty; I commend my wife and children to your care."

Encouraged by a nod of the head from his patron, he walked on with a firm step and self-possessed demeanor. The lord justiciary, having established the identity of the accused, turned them over to the executioner and his assistants to be tortured on the public square, and so furnish entertainment and an example to the mob. But the fatal cord was hardly attached when one of the accused, Tommaso Pace, announced to the vast disappointment

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of the rabble, that he was ready to confess everything and consequently demanded that he be immediately taken back before the judges. At these words the Count of Terlizzi, who was following the slightest gestures of the accused with deathly anxiety, believed that the day of reckoning was at hand for himself and his accomplices; and so, as Tommaso Pace, with his hands bound behind his back, was being conducted by two guards to the great court-room, with the notary following on behind, he exerted his authority to have him taken into a lonely house; there he seized him by the throat, thus compelling him to protrude his tongue, and at once cut it out with a razor.

The shrieks of the poor wretch thus cruelly mutilated reached the ears of Charles of Durazzo, who made his way to the apartment where the fiendish deed was perpetrated just as the Count of Terlizzi was going out, and walked up to Melazzo, who had watched the whole proceeding without the slightest indication of fear, or emotion of any kind. Assuming that a like fate was in store for him, he turned calmly to the duke, and said with a sad smile:

"It is useless to take that precaution, Monsignore; there is no occasion for you to cut out my tongue, as the noble count just did to my poor comrade. They may tear my flesh to ribbons before they extract a word from my mouth; I have given you my word, Monsignore, and you have my wife's life and the future of my children in your hands as pledges of my silence."

"I have no such request to make of you," the duke rejoined, shortly; "on the other hand, you can rid me of all my enemies at once by your revelations, and I command you to denounce them all to the justices."

The notary bowed his head sorrowfully in token of

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acquiescence; but suddenly he raised it again with a horrified gesture, stepped toward the duke, and muttered in a stifled voice:

"And the queen?"

"You would not be believed if you ventured to denounce her; but when Filippa and her son, the Count of Terlizzi and his wife, and all her closest friends and confidants, brought to trial through your disclosures, fail to find the necessary fortitude to endure the torture, and unanimously denounce her ——"

"Ah! I understand, Monsignore; you must have not my life alone, but my soul as well. It is well; once more I commend my children to your care;" and with a heart-broken sigh he walked on toward the hall where justice was administered.

The lord justiciary put the formal preliminary questions to Tommaso Pace, whereupon the unfortunate wretch, with a despairing gesture, opened his bleeding mouth, and a shiver of horror ran through the assemblage at the sight. But the astonishment and terror reached their climax when Master Nicolas di Melazzo, in a slow, calm voice, called the names of all Andrew's assassins, one after another, with the exception of the queen and the princes of the blood, and described the murder in all its details.

Not a moment was lost in ordering the arrest of the grand seneschal Roberto di Cabane, and the Counts of Terlizzi and Morcone, who were in the hall, and did not dare to lift a finger to defend themselves. An hour later, Filippa and her two daughters, and Donna Cancia joined them in prison, after vainly imploring the queen's protection. Charles and Bertrand d'Artois set the authorities at defiance from behind the walls of their fortress of St. Agatha; and several others of the

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conspirators, among whom were the Counts of Mileto and Catanzaro, saved themselves by flight.

As soon as Master Nicolas declared that he had no further disclosures to make, and that he had told the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, the lord justiciary pronounced his sentence amid absolute silence; the notary and Tommaso Pace were at once tied each to the tail of a horse, and after they had been dragged thus through the principal streets, were hanged in the market-place.

The other prisoners were cast into an underground dungeon to be put to the question on the following day. In the evening they were heaping reproaches upon each other's heads, each one claiming that the others had drawn him into the affair, when Donna Cancia, whose extraordinary temperament showed no change even when torture and death were staring her in the face, burst into a peal of laughter which drowned all the recriminations of her companions, and cried in high glee:

"Come, come, my dears, why all this bitter invective, and discourteous contradiction. We have no excuse, and we are all equally culpable. As far as I am myself concerned, the youngest of all, and not the least attractive, saving your presence, ladies, if I am condemned, I shall at least die contented; for there is no form of earthly enjoyment which I have not tasted; and I flatter myself that I have much to be forgiven, for I have distributed my favors freely, as you can testify, gentlemen. Do you not remember, old reprobate," she continued, addressing the Count of Terlizzi, "what took place between us once on a time in the queen's ante-chamber? Go to, Monsignore; don't blush before your noble family, but make your confession like a man; you know that I bear within me proof of what I say. You know, too,

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how we contrived to make it appear that poor Agnes of Durazzo, God rest her soul! was *enceinte*. I confess that I had no thought that the joke would have so sudden and so serious an ending. All this you know and many other things beside, so spare us your lamentations, in heaven's name, for they are beginning to be very tiresome, on my word; and let us prepare to die joyously, as we have lived."

As she finished speaking, the young woman yawned slightly, and lay down upon her straw pallet, where she fell soundly asleep, dreaming the sweetest dreams she had ever dreamed.

The next morning, at daybreak, an immense multitude was assembled on the sea-shore. During the night a stout palisade had been erected to hold back the spectators to such a distance that they could see the prisoners without hearing what they said. Charles of Durazzo, astride a superb horse, at the head of a brilliant retinue of knights and pages, and clad in deepest mourning from head to foot, was waiting near the enclosure. His eyes gleamed with savage joy when the accused were led through the crowd, two by two, with their hands securely bound, for he expected momentarily to hear the queen's name issue from their lips. But the lord justiciary, a man fertile in expedients, had guarded against all possible indiscretion by attaching a fish-hook to the tongue of each one of the accused. The unhappy victims were exposed to the torture, made fast to the mast of a galley, and no one was able to hear a word of the terrible revelations which the agony wrung from them.

Meanwhile Joanna, despite the just causes for complaint which she had against the majority of her accomplices, was moved to pity for a woman whom she had respected as a mother, and for the friends and

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companions of her childhood, and it may be that her heart had not entirely laid aside its former feeling for Roberto di Cabane. She sent two messengers to Bertram de Baux to beg for mercy for the culprits; but the lord justiciary seized the messengers and put them to the question; and, as they confessed that they too had taken part in the murder of Andrew, they were condemned to undergo the same punishment as the others. Donna Cancia alone, because of her physical condition, was not subjected to the torture, and her sentence was deferred until after her *accouchement.*

As the fair Abigail was on her way back to her cell, tossing a smile on this side and that to the most elegant cavaliers she could discern amid the multitude, she passed within a short distance of Charles of Durazzo and signed to him to come to her side; as her tongue had not been pierced she was able to speak with him, and did so for some time in a low voice.

Charles turned frightfully pale, and exclaimed with his hand on his sword:

"Demon!"

"You forget, Monsignore, that I am under the protection of the law."

"O my mother! my poor mother!" murmured Charles, his voice stifled with sobs; and he fell fainting to the ground.

The next morning the people were astir even earlier than the executioner, and vociferously demanded their prey. All the national or mercenary troops at the disposal of the judicial authorities were drawn up in the streets, acting as dikes to control and direct the torrent of the mob. The cruel instinct which too often degrades poor human nature was thoroughly awake in the Neapolitan populace; the frenzy of hatred, and the insatiable

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thirst for blood turned their heads and inflamed their distorted imaginations; excited groups of men and women roared like wild beasts, threatening to pull down the walls of the prison, unless the condemned were delivered over to them to be taken to their place of punishment; and a sustained, swelling clamor, like distant thunder, filled the air, and froze the queen's heart with terror.

However, notwithstanding Bertram de Baux's entire willingness to gratify the popular desire, it was impossible to complete all the preparations for the solemn occasion until the hour of noon, when the sun was pouring down his hottest rays upon the city. A terrific shout arose from ten thousand panting breasts when the news first spread through the crowd that the condemned were about to appear; then there was a moment of painful silence as the prison doors swung slowly open upon their rusty, creaking hinges. A triple row of horsemen, with visors lowered and lances at rest, were the first to appear, and in their wake, amid hooting and imprecations, the culprits came forth one after another, each bound upon a rough cart, gagged and naked to the waist, between two executioners, who were under orders to apply the torture to them from the beginning to the end of the route.

Upon the first cart was the former laundress of Catania, sometime wife of the grand seneschal of the kingdom and governess of the queen, Filippa di Cabane; the two executioners who stood at her right and left hand, and a little behind, scourged her with such severity that the course of the cart could be followed by the traces of the blood which flowed from her wounds.

Immediately behind their mother, upon separate carts, came the Countesses of Terlizzi and Morcone, the elder

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of whom was hardly nineteen. They were both so wondrous fair, that a murmur of admiration arose from the crowd, and eager glances were cast upon their bare and trembling shoulders. But the sight of their adorable charms brought only a ferocious smile to the lips of the men who were entrusted with the duty of torturing them *en route*; they were armed with razors, with which they cut off pieces of their flesh with sensuous moderation, and threw them to the mob, who fought fiercely for them, and pointed out to the butchers those portions of the bodies of their victims from which they should cut the next slice.

Roberto di Cabane, grand seneschal of the kingdom, the Counts of Terlizzi and Morcone, Raimondo Pace, brother of Tommaso, who was executed two days before, and several other condemned were being similarly maltreated with thongs and razors upon other carts; but their flesh was also in some cases torn out with red-hot pincers, and thrown upon live embers. From beginning to end not one murmur issued from the lips of the grand seneschal, nor did he once writhe under the excruciating agony; and yet the executioners who devoted themselves to him were so merciless, that the wretched creature was dead before he reached the place of execution.

In the centre of the square of Sant' Eligio, an immense pile of fire-wood was prepared, and upon it the mutilated remnants of the culprits were thrown. The Count of Terlizzi and Filippa were still living; and tears of blood flowed from the eyes of the unhappy mother when she saw her son's body thrown upon the fire with the quivering remains of her two daughters, whose muffled shrieks showed that they had not ceased to suffer. But suddenly a terrible uproar rose above the shrieks of the victims; the barricade was broken through or overturned

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by the mob, who, in a frenzy of bloodthirstiness threw themselves upon the burning mass, armed with swords and axes and knives, snatched from the flames the bodies of the culprits, dead or living, hacked them to pieces, and carried away their bones as souvenirs of that awful day, to be fashioned into whistles or dagger-hilts.

Not even this horrifying spectacle was sufficient to satisfy Charles of Durazzo's thirst for vengeance. Cordially seconded by the lord justiciary he spurred the authorities on to fresh executions day after day, and Andrew's death soon came to be no more than a pretext for putting to death under the forms of law all those who opposed to the carrying out of his designs. But Louis of Tarento, who had won Joanna's heart and was hotly soliciting the necessary dispensation to legalize his marriage, looked upon all these acts of assumed supreme authority, which were done against his will and in flagrant derogation of the rights of the queen, as personal affronts, and put arms in the hands of all his adherents, increasing his forces with all the adventurers whom he could hire to join him, until he had on foot a sufficient force to defend himself against the attacks of his cousin. Naples was thus divided into two hostile camps, which came to blows on the slightest pretext, and these daily skirmishes were invariably followed by some scene of pillage or of death.

But a vast deal of money was required to satisfy the demands of his soldiers, and to carry on the bitter struggle against Charles of Durazzo and his own brother Robert, and one fine day Louis found that his own coffers as well as the queen's were empty. Joanna relapsed into despair, and her lover, always gallant and generous, did his best to reassure her, although he had himself no very clear idea how he should extricate

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himself from the dilemma. But his mother, Catherine, whose ambition was fully gratified to see one of her sons, it mattered not which, upon the throne of Naples, came to their assistance unexpectedly, and announced with great solemnity that in a few days she would lay at her niece's feet a treasure so rich that, queen as she was, she had never dreamed of the like.

The empress took with her half of her son's troops, and laid siege to the fortress of St. Agatha, where Charles and Bertrand d'Artois had taken shelter from the officers of the law. The old count, dumfounded at the sudden appearance of this woman, who had been the soul of the conspiracy, and utterly at a loss to understand her hostile demonstration, sent messengers to her to demand the meaning of such a display of military force. Catherine replied in the following words, which we translate literally:

"My dear friends, say to Charles, our faithful friend, on our behalf, that we would speak with him in secret touching an affair in which we are equally interested, and that he need feel no alarm at our hostile bearing, for we have assumed it designedly, and for a certain purpose which we will explain to him at length in our interview. We know that he is confined to his bed by the gout, and we are not surprised at his failure to come out to meet us. Be pleased, therefore, to salute him, and reassure him on our behalf, and say to him that we ask leave to enter upon his domain, if such be his pleasure, attended only by Signor Nicolas Acciajuoli, our trusty adviser, and ten of our soldiers, to converse with him upon weighty subjects which we cannot entrust to others."

Such frank and friendly explanations at once overcame the old count's distrust, and he sent his son Bertrand to meet the empress, and to receive her with all the respect

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due to her rank and her high station at the court of Naples. Catherine entered the castle eagerly, and with every indication of sincere delight, and after she had inquired for the count's health with profuse expressions of the deepest interest, she lowered her voice mysteriously, and explained that the object of her visit was to consult his tried experience as to the condition of affairs at Naples, and to solicit his active coöperation in favor of the queen. She added, that as there was no reason for her to leave St. Agatha immediately, she would await his convalescence before she enlightened him as to what had taken place since he left court, and asked him to advise her. She succeeded at last in winning the old man's confidence, and in putting his suspicions to flight so adroitly, that he begged her to honor the chateau with her presence as long as her engagements would permit; and gradually her whole force was admitted within the walls. That was what Catherine was waiting for; on the day when the last of her army was installed in the chateau, she entered the count's apartment, followed by four solders, and with a fierce frown, seized the old man by the throat.

"Vile traitor!" she cried in a voice of thunder, "you shall not escape from our hands until you have received the punishment you deserve. Meanwhile show me the place where your treasure is hidden, unless you would have me throw your body to the crows which are hovering over the towers of your fortress."

The count, with a strong grasp at his throat, and a dagger at his breast, did not even try to cry for help; he fell on his knees, and implored the empress to spare at least the life of his son, who was not yet completely recovered from the black melancholy with which his mind had been clouded since the horrible catastrophe;

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he dragged himself painfully to the place where he had buried his treasure, and pointed it out to the empress, repeating again and again amid his sobs:

"Take everything, take my life; but spare my son!"

"Catherine could not contain her joy when she saw spread out at her feet vases of exquisite workmanship and unexampled magnificence, caskets of pearls and diamonds and rubies of incalculable value, chests filled with ingots of gold, and a vast store of marvels of Asiatic splendor which surpassed the wildest dreams of the most unbridled imagination. But when the old man, in a faltering voice, insisted upon his son's liberty as the price of his fortune and his life, she resumed her demeanor of pitiless sternness, and replied harshly:

"I have already ordered your son to be brought here; but prepare to say farewell to him forever, for he is to be taken forthwith to the fortress of Melfi; you, in all probability, will end your days in the castle of St. Agatha."

The poor count's grief at this sudden and violent separation was so great that he was found dead in his dungeon a day or two later, with his lips covered with blood-flecked foam, and his hands gnawed in his desperation. Nor did Bertrand long survive him. The last remnants of his reason fled when he heard of his father's death, and he hanged himself to the bars of his cell. Thus did Andrew's murderers destroy each other like wild animals confined in the same cage.

Catherine of Tarento in due time arrived at Naples with the treasure she had obtained by such honorable means, exulting in her triumph, and meditating vast schemes. But fresh disasters had befallen during her absence. Charles of Durazzo, having made a last demand upon the queen to bestow upon him the dukedom

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of Calabria, a title which had always been borne by the heir presumptive, maddened by her refusal, had written to Louis of Hungary, urging him to invade the kingdom, and promising to assist him in the undertaking with all his strength, and to give into his hands those of the principal plotters of his brother's death, who had thus far eluded the clutches of the law.

The King of Hungary eagerly accepted the offer, and equipped an army with which to march to the conquest of Naples and to avenge the death of his brother. The tears of Elizabeth, his mother, and the counsel of Brother Robert, Andrew's former minister, who had fled to Buda, confirmed him in his schemes of vengeance. He had already complained in bitter terms at the court of Avignon, that although the lesser criminals had been punished, the principal culprit was left in revolting impunity, and while her hands were still wet with her husband's blood, was persisting in her adulterous courses. To which the pope mildly replied that, in so far as it depended on him, he would not have failed to satisfy every legitimate complaint; but that the accusation must be clearly set forth and supported by proofs; that Joanna's conduct had certainly been blameworthy both at the time of her husband's death, and since, but that his Majesty should reflect that the Church of Rome, which seeks truth and justice before everything else, must always proceed with the greatest circumspection, and could not afford to judge altogether by appearances, especially in an affair of such gravity.

Joanna, on her side, was terrified by the preparations for war, and sent ambassadors to the Republic of Florence, to clear herself of the crime laid at her door by public opinion, and did not hesitate to try to make

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explanations to the King of Hungary; but Andrew's brother replied by a letter of startling laconism.

"Your former disorderly life," he wrote, "and your assumption of exclusive power; your neglect to avenge the death of your husband upon his murderers, your subsequent marriage, and the very fact of your seeking to excuse yourself, are sufficient proofs that you were a party to the foul deed."

Catherine did not allow herself to be disheartened by the threats of Louis of Hungary; she considered the plight of her son and the queen with the keen, cold scrutiny which never deceived her, and she realized that her only safe course was to effect a reconciliation with Charles by acceding to all his demands. In that event, one of two things would happen; either their joint efforts would be successful in repelling the King of Hungary, and their accounts could be adjusted later when the more pressing danger was past; or they would be overborne by the invading forces, in which case she would at least have the satisfaction of dragging him down with her when she fell.

The bargain was struck in the garden of Castel-Nuovo, whither Charles came at the invitation of the queen and her aunt. Joanna bestowed upon him the much-coveted title of Duke of Calabria, whereupon Charles, looking upon that preferment as a virtual acknowledgment that he was next heir to the crown, at once marched upon Aquila, which had already hoisted the standard of Hungary. The unhappy man did not see that he was rushing straight to his destruction.

When the Empress of Constantinople saw this man, whom she hated more than all the others, set forth in high spirits, she gazed darkly at him, as if warned by woman's keener instinct that ill fortune was in store for

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him. As there was no more treason for her to plot on earth, and no more vengeance for her to wreak, the vital spark was suddenly extinguished by some unknown disease, and she died without uttering a groan, and without arousing a regretful feeling in any breast.

Meanwhile, the King of Hungary, having traversed Italy from north to south, entered the kingdom of Naples by way of Puglia. He received tokens of sympathetic interest all along the route, and Alberto and Martino della Scala, noblemen of Verona, demonstrated their hearty concurrence in his undertaking by sending him three hundred horsemen.

The news of the arrival of the Hungarians threw the Neapolitan court into an indescribable state of excitement and alarm. They had hoped that the king would be checked in his progress by the papal legate, who had gone to Foligno to forbid him, in the name of the Holy Father and under pain of excommunication to go farther south without the consent first obtained of the Holy See. But Louis replied to Clement's messenger that as soon as he became master of Naples he should look upon himself as a feudatory of the Church, but that until that time he was responsible to none save God and his own conscience.

Thus the avenging army appeared with the suddenness of lightning in the very heart of the realm; before they had begun to think of taking measures to hold it back. There was but one course to pursue; the queen, having assembled those noblemen who were most deeply attached to her, made them take an oath of homage and fidelity to Louis of Tarento, whom she presented to them as her husband, and after a tearful parting from her most faithful adherents embarked secretly at midnight on a Provençal galley for Marseilles.

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Louis of Tarento, following the impulse of his venturesome and chivalrous nature, marched out of Naples at the head of three thousand horse and a considerable number of foot-soldiers, and took up his position on the bank of the Voltorno, to oppose the crossing of the hostile army; but the King of Hungary had anticipated the manœuvre, and while his adversary was awaiting him at Capua, he arrived at Benevento by way of the Alife and Morcone mountains, and on the same day received envoys from Naples, who after congratulating him upon his arrival, with a soaring burst of eloquence, offered him the keys of the city, and swore obedience to him as the lawful successor of Charles of Anjou.

The news of the surrender of Naples soon spread through the queen's camp, and all the princes of the blood and leading officers abandoned Louis of Tarento, and sought protection in the capital. Resistance thenceforth was out of the question; Louis, attended by his most trusted adviser, Nicolas Acciajuoli, returned to Naples during the evening of the day on which his relatives had left him for their own preservation.

As the hours passed the danger of his position grew rapidly greater, and his brothers and cousins entreated him to seek safety in a speedy flight, and avoid drawing down the king's wrath upon the whole city; unfortunately there was no vessel in the harbor in condition to put to sea. The terror of the princes knew no bounds; but Louis, trusting to his lucky star, embarked with the faithful Acciajuoli upon a weather-beaten, battered craft, and with four rowers doing their utmost were out of sight in a few moments, leaving his family in the deepest anxiety concerning his fate, until they learned

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that he had reached Pisa, whence he set out for Provence to join the queen.

Charles of Durazzo and Robert of Tarento, the eldest of their respective branches of the royal family, after a hasty consultation, decided to try and soothe the Hungarian monarch's wrath by the most complete submission. Leaving their younger brothers at Naples they betook themselves without loss of time to Aversa, where the king had fixed his headquarters. Louis received them with every indication of cordial friendship, and asked them with some concern why their brothers were not with them. The princes replied that they had remained in Naples to prepare to extend a fitting welcome to his majesty. Louis thanked them for their courteous intention, but at the same time urged them to send for the young princes to come to his headquarters, adding that it would be vastly more agreeable to him to make his entry into the city surrounded by all his family, and that he was exceedingly anxious to meet his young cousins. Charles and Robert in conformity with the king's wishes at once dispatched their squires to request their brothers to come to Aversa; but Louis of Durazzo who was the oldest of the children, weeping bitterly, begged the others not to comply, and informed the messengers that a severe headache would prevent his leaving Naples. Such a puerile excuse was sure to irritate Charles, and in the course of the day, a precise, categorical command, which admitted no evasion, compelled the unfortunate children to join the Hungarian sovereign. Louis embraced them one after another with the greatest warmth, asked them several questions with an air of affectionate interest, kept them to supper, and did not dismiss them until the night was far advanced.

After Charles of Durazzo had retired for the night to

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the apartment allotted to him, Lello of Aquila and the Count of Fondi stole mysteriously to his bedside, and having made sure that they could not be overheard, warned him that the king had determined, at a council held that morning, to put him to death, and to deprive the other princes of their liberty. Charles listened with an incredulous air, suspecting some hidden treachery, and replied dryly that he had too much confidence in his cousin's loyalty to credit such a base calumny. Lello persisted and entreated him, in the names of all who were dearest to him, to heed their advice; but the duke lost his temper and sternly commanded him to leave the room.

The next morning the king greeted them with the same warmth, was equally lavish with marks of affection to the children, and invited them to supper as before. It was a magnificent entertainment; the great dining hall was flooded with light, the tables were resplendent with gold plate, the air was heavy with the intoxicating odor of flowers; wines foamed and sparkled in the cups or gushed from the jars in a ruby stream; noisy, fragmentary sentences flew back and forth in every direction, and joy beamed on every face.

Charles of Durazzo supped with his brothers at a table facing the king's. Gradually his glance became fixed and thoughtful. He reflected that in that same hall Andrew himself sat at supper the night before his tragic end, and that of those who had a hand therein, some had died in agony, others were languishing in prison, the queen, an exile and fugitive, was imploring the compassion of strangers; he alone was free. The thought made him shudder in spite of himself. He congratulated himself upon the remarkable cleverness with which he had managed his diabolical schemes, and,

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throwing off his momentary gloom, he smiled with an indefinable expression of proud satisfaction. With that smile the insensate fool mocked at God's justice. But Lello of Aquila, who was among those who were serving the guests, put his mouth to his ear, and said in a solemn whisper:

"Unhappy man, why did you refuse to believe me? Fly! there is still time."

Charles, irritated at this persistence, threatened to repeat what he said to the king, if he uttered another word.

"I have done my duty," muttered Lello, bending his head; "God's will be done!"

As he moved away, the king rose and the duke approached him to take his leave of him; suddenly Louis' expression changed, and he cried in a voice of thunder:

"Traitor! at last you are in our power, and you shall die as you deserve; but before you are delivered to the hand of the executioner, confess with your own mouth all the hideous treachery of which you have been guilty toward our Royal Majesty, so that we may need no other witness to justify us in condemning you to pay a penalty proportioned to your crimes. We must have our reckoning now, Charles of Durazzo. Tell me first of all why you seconded with your infamous schemes your uncle, Cardinal de Périgord in preventing the coronation of my brother, thus depriving him of all share in the royal authority, and thereby directly promoting his terrible death? Oh! do not attempt to deny it. Here is the letter, sealed with your seal; a letter which you wrote in secret, but which now publicly accuses you. Why, after you had enticed us hither to avenge the murder of our brother (to which you doubtless were privy), did you suddenly go over to the queen's side and

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march against our town of Aquila, presuming to raise an army against our faithful subjects? You hoped, traitor, to use us as a step to mount the throne after ridding yourself of all your other rivals. You would simply have awaited our departure to put to death the viceregent whom we should leave to represent us, and thus to gain possession of the kingdom. But this time your foresight was at fault. But there is another crime which you have committed, the crime of high treason, which I will punish without pity. You stole away the wife, whom Robert, our ancestor, destined for us, by his last will, of which you knew the contents. Tell me, villain, what excuse have you to make for stealing the Princess Maria?"

The frenzy of rage into which Louis had worked himself changed his voice so that the last words resembled the roar of a wild beast; his eyes gleamed with a feverish light, and his lips were pale and trembling. Charles and his brothers fell on their knees in deadly terror, and the wretched duke twice tried to speak, but his teeth were chattering so violently that he could not articulate a word. At last, however, the sight of his poor innocent brothers, whose ruin he had wrought by his crimes, restored his courage in some degree, and he said to the king:

"Monsignore, the awful expression of your countenance makes me tremble with apprehension. On my knees I implore you to have mercy upon me if I have failed in my duty to you, for God is my witness that I urged your coming to this kingdom with no guilty purpose, but that I have always desired and still desire, with all the sincerity of my soul, to see you master here. And now I am well convinced that your displeasure has fallen upon my head, only because of what perfidious

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advisers have whispered in your ear. If it is true, as you said but now, that I marched upon Aquila with an armed force, it is equally true that I could do no otherwise, being constrained as I was by Queen Joanna; and no sooner had I learned of your arrival at Fermo than I withrew my troops. I hope, therefore, to obtain mercy and forgiveness at your hands, for Jesus Christ's sake, and in the name of my bygone services, and of my tried fidelity. However, I see that you are angered against me now, so I will hold my peace, and wait until your passion has subsided. Once more, Monsignore, have pity on us, I beseech you, since we are in your Majesty's power."

The king turned his head, and moved slowly away, entrusting the prisoners to Stephen Vayvoda, and the Count of Zomic, who kept them under guard during the night in a room adjoining the king's apartments. The following day Louis, having consulted his council anew, gave orders that Charles of Durazzo should be put to death on the same spot where poor Andrew was strangled, and sent the other princes of the blood in chains to Hungary, where they were detained in prison for a long while.

Charles, whose reason was almost destroyed by such an unforeseen catastrophe, and by the memory of all his dastardly crimes, trembled like a poltroon with death staring him in the face, and was as one struck by lightning. Cowering on his knees, with his face hidden in his hands, and sobbing convulsively from time to time, he struggled to reduce to some order the chaos of thoughts which kept his brain whirling as in a frightful nightmare. It was black night in his soul; but from moment to moment the dark shadows were rent asunder by flashes of light, and against the sombre background of

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his despair shining figures passed and repassed, casting mocking smiles upon him as they vanished. Then voices from the other world buzzed confusedly in his ears; he saw a long procession of phantoms file before him as on the day when Master Nicolas di Melazzo had pointed out to him the conspirators in the underground passage of Castel-Nuovo. But this time the spectres were carrying their heads in their hands, shaking them by their gory locks, so that drops of blood spattered upon him. Others were waving scourges, or brandishing razors, each one threatening him with the instrument of his own torture. Pursued by this infernal bedlam, the miserable wretch opened his mouth to voice his terror in a shriek, but his breath failed him, and his voice died on his lips.

Then he saw his mother stretching out her arms to him from afar, and in his agony it seemed to him that if he could but reach her side he was saved. But with each step that he took, the road narrowed more and more, and the walls that skirted it came so near together that he left pieces of his flesh hanging to them; and when he reached the end of his journey, gasping, bleeding and naked, still his mother was far away, and it was all to be done over again. Still the phantoms were at his heels, with sneering laughter, and howling in his ears:

"Accursed be the infamous villain who murdered his mother!"

Charles was aroused from this horrible nightmare by the wailing of his brothers, who came to embrace him for the last time before going aboard the galley which was to bear them to their destination. The duke asked their forgiveness in a hollow voice, and fell upon the floor in his despair. The children threw themselves

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JOANNA OF NAPLES

The execution of those implicated in the murder of Andrew of Hungary.

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upon him, loudly demanding to be allowed to share their brother's fate, and begging for death as a mitigation of their punishment. They were parted at last, but their grief-stricken cries long echoed in the heart of the condemned man. After a few moments of silence two soldiers and two Hungarian squires entered the room and announced to the Duke of Durazzo that his hour had come.

Charles followed them unresistingly to the fatal balcony on which Andrew was strangled. There he was asked if he wished to make confession, and upon his affirmative reply, they sent for a monk from the convent where that terrible tragedy took place, who listened to his confession of all his sins, and gave him absolution. The duke thereupon rose and walked to the spot where Andrew was thrown down when the rope was put around his neck, and there on his knees, he said to the executioners:

"Tell me, my friends, in pity's name, if there is still any hope for my life?"

They replied in the negative, and Charles thereupon cried:

"Then do what you have been commanded to do."

At these words, one of the squires buried his sword in his breast, and another cut off his head with a knife; his body was then thrown over the balcony into the garden, where Andrew's body lay three days without sepulchre.

Thereafter the King of Hungary, with the symbol of death borne aloft in his vanguard, set out for Naples, refusing all the honors which were tendered him, sending back the canopy beneath which he was to have made his entry, and without pausing to give audience to the city's ambassadors, or to acknowledge the acclamations

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of the mob. Clad in full armor he proceeded straightway to Castel-Nuovo, leaving desolation and terror in his wake.

The first act with which his entry into the capital was signalized was the issuance of an order to put to death Donna Cancia, whose execution was postponed, as we said, because of her pregnancy. She was taken to the square of Sant' Eligio upon a cart, as the others were, and there burned at the stake. Her trials had not impaired her beauty, and she was decked out as if for a great festival; gay and mocking to the very last, she did not cease to joke with her executioners, and to throw kisses to the crowd.

A few days later the king ordered the arrest of Godfrey di Marsan, Count of Squillace, grand admiral of the kingdom, and promised to spare his life, on condition that he should put into his hands Conrad of Catanzaro, a relative of the admiral's, who was charged with having been a party to the conspiracy against Andrew. The grand admiral was not ashamed to purchase his own safety at the price of infamous treachery, and to send his own son to induce Conrad to return to the city. The unfortunate creature was delivered up to the king, who caused him to be broken alive upon a wheel covered with razors.

The king's fury seemed to be increased rather than appeased by the spectacle of these barbarities. Every day fresh denunciations led to fresh executions. The prisons were overflowing with persons accused, and Louis indulged his savage wrath with ever-increasing ardor. It soon began to be feared that the city and the whole realm were to be dealt with as if the entire nation had contributed to Andrew's death. People began to murmur against this carnival of barbarity, and the thoughts of

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all turned longingly toward the fugitive queen. The Neapolitan nobles had taken the oath of allegiance to Louis with great reluctance, and when it came the turn of the Counts of San Severino, they feared some trick and refused to appear all at the same time before the Hungarian monarch, but fortified themselves in the city of Salerno, and sent one of their number, Archbishop Roger, to ascertain the king's intentions with regard to them. Louis gave him a magnificent reception, and made him a privy councillor and grand prothonotary of the kingdom. Not till then did Robert of San Severino and Roger, Count of Clairmont, venture to present themselves before the king; and after swearing allegiance to him, they withdrew again to their estates. Some of the other noblemen imitated their attitude of reserve, and hiding their discontent under a show of respect, awaited the favorable moment to throw off the foreign yoke.

Meanwhile the queen had arrived at Nice after a journey of five days without delay or hindrance of any kind. Her progress through Provence was a sort of triumph. Her beauty, her youth, her unhappy past, everything about her, even to the mysterious rumors concerning her adventures, conspired to arouse the interest of the Provençal people. They improvised tournaments and festivals to lighten the burden of the proscribed princess' exile; but amid the joyful acclamations which burst from every chateau and village and city, Joanna's deathly melancholy found no relief, and she brooded in silence over her sorrow and her bitter memories.

At the gates of Aix she found the clergy and nobility, and the chief magistrates, who welcomed her with respect, but without enthusiasm. As the queen entered the city, she marveled greatly at the indifference of the people, and the constrained and gloomy bearing of the

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dignitaries who formed her escort. A thousand reasons for anxiety presented themselves to her perturbed mind, and she went so far as to fear some intrigue on the part of the King of Hungary.

When the cortêge reached Chateau Arnaud, the nobles formed a double line, and allowed Joanna, her councillor Spinelli, and two of her women to pass through; then closed up behind them, and separated her from the rest of her suite; after which they stood guard at the gates of the fortress, turn and turn about.

These proceedings left no room for doubt that the queen was a prisoner. She questioned the principal dignitaries, who, while protesting their devotion and respect, refused to enter into explanations until they should hear from Avignon. Meanwhile they bestowed upon her all the honors which any queen could expect; but she was kept always in sight and was forbidden to leave the castle. This new vexation increased her chagrin; she knew not what had become of Louis of Tarento, and her imagination, always quick to invent disaster, kept telling her over and over again that she would soon have to mourn his loss.

That prince, still accompanied by his faithful Acciajuoli, had been driven ashore at the port of Pisa after much hardship, and had journeyed thence to Florence, in search of assistance in the way of men and money; but the Florentines concluded to maintain strict neutrality, and consequently declined to allow him to enter the city. Bereft of this last hope, the prince was revolving dark projects in his brain, when Nicolas Acciajuoli said to him in a tone of conviction:

"Monsignore, it is not given to mankind to enjoy uninterrupted prosperity; there are calamities beyond the reach of human foresight. You once were rich and

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powerful, and to-day you are flying from your country in disguise, and seeking aid from strangers. You must reserve your strength for better days to come. I have still a considerable fortune, and I have relatives and friends whose means are at my disposal; let us try to join the queen, and let us decide at once what we must do to that end. So far as I am myself concerned, I will never fail to defend you, and to obey you as my lord and master."

The prince most gratefully accepted his generous offer, and replied that he would entrust to him his person and his whole future. Acciajuoli, not content with placing himself unreservedly at his master's service, prevailed upon his brother Angelo, Archbishop of Florence, who possessed great influence at the court of Clement VI., to join them in arousing the pope's interest in the cause of Louis of Tarento. Thereupon, without further delay, the prince and his adviser, with the worthy prelate, took ship for Marseilles; but learning that the queen was detained at Aix they landed at Aigues-Mortes, and went directly to Avignon.

The results of the pope's esteem and affection for the person and character of the Archbishop of Florence were soon made manifest; for Louis was received at Avignon with a fatherly kindness which he was far from anticipating. When he bent his knee before the sovereign pontiff, his Holiness leaned over affectionately and helped him to rise, saluting him with the title of king.

Two days later, another ecclesiastic, the Archbishop of Aix, visited the queen, and with a solemn inclination of the head, addressed her as follows:

"Most gracious and dearly beloved sovereign; deign to permit the most humble and devoted of your servants to implore, in the name of your subjects, your gracious

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forgiveness for the painful but absolutely essential step which they felt bound to take in regard to your Majesty. At the moment of your arrival within our borders, the council of your faithful city of Aix had learned from a trustworthy source, that the King of France had conceived the plan of bestowing our land upon one of his sons, recompensing you for the loss by the cession of other territory, and that the Duke of Normandy had betaken himself to Avignon to solicit in person permission to make such exchange. We had definitely resolved, Madame, and God had received our oaths to that effect, to lay down our lives to the last man, rather than submit to the execrable, tyrannous yoke of the French. But before the beginning of bloodshed, we determined to retain your august person as a sacred hostage, as the Ark of the Covenant, upon which no one might have ventured to lay hands without falling dead, and which might keep the scourge of war away from our walls. But we have now perused the formal abandonment of that claim in a letter which the sovereign pontiff has sent to us from Avignon, and in which he offers himself as guarantor of your royal promise. We therefore give you back your liberty without reserve, and we shall make no farther efforts to keep you in our midst except by our prayers and entreaties. Depart, Madame, if such be your good pleasure; but before you leave our country, which your departure will afflict beyond measure, give us leave to hope that you will forgive the apparent violence we used toward you under pressure of the fear that we were to lose you, and remember, that on the day when you cease to be our queen, you will have signed the death warrant of all your subjects."

Joanna reassured the archbishop and his fellow-deputies of her good city of Aix, with a sad smile, and

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promised them that she would carry away in her heart an everlasting remembrance of their love and attachment. For it was impossible to mistake the real sentiments of the nobility and the common people, and such uncommon fidelity revealed by sincere tears, touched her to the bottom of her heart, and awoke bitter thoughts of the past.

A magnificent, triumphal reception awaited her just without the gates of Avignon. Louis of Tarento and all the cardinals who were in residence at the court came out to meet her. Pages dressed in garments of dazzling splendor carried above her head a canopy of scarlet velvet embroidered with fleurs-de-lis in gold thread and adorned with waving plumes. Handsome youths and lovely maidens, with flower-crowned brows walked before her, singing her praises. The streets through which the procession was to pass were bordered with a double hedge of human beings, the houses were gaily decked, and the bells were clanging madly as on the great holidays of the Church.

Clement VI. received the queen at the Castle of Avignon with all the pompous splendor with which he knew so well how to invest solemn functions, and she was afterwards conducted to apartments, in the palace of Cardinal Napoléon des Ursins who, after his return from the Conclave of Pérouse, built that royal abode at Villeneuve which was afterwards occupied by the popes themselves.

No words can adequately describe the extraordinary aspect of the city of Avignon at that period. Since Clement V. transported the seat of the papacy thither, the Provençal rival of Rome had seen beautiful churches and public edifices rise within her walls and palaces wherein the cardinals lived in a style of unexampled

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luxury and magnificence. All matters involving the fate of peoples or of kings were at that time dealt with at the castle. Ambassadors from every court, merchants from all nations, adventurers from every land, Italians, Spaniards, Hungarians, Arabs, Jews, Bohemians, soldiers, clowns, poets, monks, courtesans elbowed each other in a confused, motley throng in the streets. It was a hopeless medley of tongues, of manners and of costumes, an inextricable jumble of fine linen and rags, of opulence and poverty, of vice and virtue. The austere poets of the middle ages stigmatized the accursed city with the name of the "New Babylon."

There exists a curious souvenir of Joanna's stay at Avignon, and of her assumption of sovereign authority there. She was so indignant at the effrontery of the courtesans who shamelessly touched elbows with all the most respectable citizens on the streets, that she published a celebrated ordinance, the first of the kind and the model upon which all subsequent ones have been based, to compel these unfortunate creatures, who live upon the proceeds of the sale of their honor, to dwell together in one establishment, which was to be open every day in the year, except the last three days of Holy Week, but which Jews were forbidden to enter at any time. An abbess was chosen every year to the superintendency of this unique convent. Rules were established for the government of the order, and severe penalties imposed for breaches of discipline. The jurists of the day were loud in their praise of this salutary proceeding, and the fair dames of Avignon came loyally to the defence of the queen against the slanderous rumors which were aimed at her reputation; they were unanimous in their eulogies upon the virtue of Andrew's widow, but the chorus of praise was marred by the muttering of the inmates of the

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new establishment, who accused Joanna in their brutal language of interfering with their traffic in order to secure the monopoly of it for herself.

About this time Maria of Durazzo joined her sister. She had succeeded in gaining the shelter of the convent of Santa-Croce with her two little girls, after her husband's death, and while Louis of Hungary was intent upon burning his victims, the hapless girl, exchanging her female garb, for the frock of an old monk, escaped as by a miracle and succeeded in finding her way aboard a vessel which bore her to Provence. Maria related to her sister the frightful details of the bloodthirsty barbarities of the King of Hungary; nor was it long before the statements of the heart-broken princess were confirmed by a new demonstration of his implacable animosity. Ambassadors from Louis made their appearance at Avignon, to make formal demand for the condemnation of the queen.

That was a memorable day on which Joanna of Naples pleaded her cause in person before the pope, in presence of all the cardinals then at Avignon, of all the ambassadors of foreign powers, and of all the eminent persons who had hurried thither from the ends of Europe, to be present at the discussion, which stands by itself in the annals of history.

Let the reader imagine a vast enclosure, in the centre of which, upon a lofty throne, was seated, as president of this august consistory, God's vicar upon earth, the absolute, supreme judge, clothed with spiritual and temporal power, with divine and human authority. To the right and left of the sovereign pontiff the purple-robed cardinals sat, in arm-chairs arranged in a circle, and behind these kings of the Sacred College, their majestic court of bishops, vicars, canons, deacons, archdeacons,

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and all the endless hierarchy of the church, stretched away to the farthest limits of the enclosure.

In front of the pontifical throne was a platform reserved for the queen and her suite. At the feet of the pope stood the ambassadors of the King of Hungary, who were to play the part of silent accusers, the circumstances of the crime having been already investigated, and the evidence of the queen's guilt examined by a commission appointed for that purpose. The rest of the space was crowded by a gorgeous company of high dignitaries, famous captains and noble strangers, who vied with each other in magnificence of equipment and haughtiness of demeanor.

All eyes were turned in breathless anticipation upon the platform from which Joanna was to pronounce her defence. An impulse of restless curiosity made the centre of the enclosure the point around which surged this compact mass of humanity, above whose heads towered the cardinals like brilliant-hued poppies waving in the wind above a field of golden grain.

The queen appeared, between her uncle, the aged Cardinal de Périgord, and her aunt, the Countess Agnes, giving a hand to each. Her bearing was so modest and at the same time so dignified and proud, her brow so sad and so spotlessly pure, her expression so full of confidence in her own innocence, that the hearts of all present were with her before she uttered a word. Joanna was at this time twenty years old, and her glorious beauty had attained its perfect development; but her extreme pallor dimmed the lustre of her transparent, velvety skin, and her emaciated cheeks bore the marks of suffering and expiation. Among the spectators whose glances were fixed upon her with the most intense interest, was a young man with chestnut hair, a piercing eye, and

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strongly marked features, whom we shall meet again later in our story; but in order not to divert the attention of our readers, we will content ourselves with informing them that the young man's name was Jayme of Aragon, that he was Infant of Majorca, and that he would have given all his blood to stay a single one of the tears which trembled on the queen's eyelashes.

Joanna spoke in a broken voice of deep feeling, stopping from time to time to wipe her glistening eyes, or to heave one of those sighs which go straight to the heart. She described her husband's death with such keen suffering, and pictured with such startling vividness the mad terror with which she was seized and struck dumb by that awful occurrence; she carried her hands to her head with such desperate energy, as if to tear out the madness that remained there, that a shudder of horror and compassion ran through the assemblage. And certain it is that, if her statements were false, her anguish was real and terrible. An angel stained by crime she was, and she lied like Satan; but like Satan she was torn by the indescribable torment of humbled pride, and of remorse. And so, when at the end of her address she burst into tears, and implored assistance and protection against the usurper of her throne, her last words were drowned by a general shout of assent, while many hands sought their sword-hilts, and the Hungarian ambassadors took their leave with shame and humiliation imprinted on their features.

That same evening, to the unbounded satisfaction of the whole population, a papal decree declared Joanna of Naples innocent of the slightest complicity in the assassination of her husband. But, as it was impossible to explain away the queen's conduct after the event, and her negligence in proceeding against the authors of the

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crime, the pope discovered that there was indisputable evidence of sorcery in the affair, and that Joanna's fault was the necessary consequence of some malignant spell which had been cast upon the poor woman, and which she could not avert. At the same time his Holiness confirmed the queen's marriage with Louis of Tarento, and bestowed upon the latter the Order of the Golden Rose, and the title of King of Sicily and Jerusalem.

It is a significant fact that on the eve of her acquittal Joanna sold the city of Avignon to the pope for the sum of eighty thousand florins.

While the queen was pleading her cause at the court of Clement VI., a horrible pestilence, known as the "Black Plague," of which Boccaccio has left us such a graphic description, was ravaging the kingdom of Naples and the whole of Italy as well. According to the figures given by Matteo Villani, Florence lost three-fifths of her population, Bologna two-thirds, and almost all of Europe suffered in the same awful proportion.

The Neapolitans were already weary of the barbarity and rapacity of the Hungarians, and were simply awaiting a fitting opportunity to rise against the foreign oppressor, and recall their legitimate sovereign, whom, in spite of her wrongdoing they had never ceased to love, so great is the power of youth and beauty upon that sensuous people. As soon as the plague had begun to disorganize the army, and to cause confusion in the city, imprecations against the tyrant and his bloodthirsty minions were heard on every side. Louis of Hungary threatened at the same moment by the wrath of heaven and the vengeance of the people, and equally apprehensive of the effects of the pestilence and of the uprising, disappeared suddenly in the middle of the

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night, leaving the government in the hands of Corrado Lupo, one of his captains; he hastened to Barletta and took ship there, leaving the kingdom in his turn, as he had compelled Louis of Tarento to do some months before.

This information reached Avignon just as the pope had forwarded to the queen the bull giving her absolution. It was at once decided to wrest the kingdom from Louis' lieutenant, and Nicolas Acciajuoli set out for Naples armed with the miracle-working document which was to establish the queen's innocence to everybody's satisfaction, to put all their scruples to flight, and rearouse their enthusiasm in her cause. The councillor betook himself first of all to the castle of Melzi, commanded by his son Lorenzo; it was the only fortress which had refused to surrender to the Hungarian king. The father and son embraced with the natural and laudable pride which two members of the same family, who have done their full duty like heroes, experience when they meet. The Governor of Melzi informed the confidential adviser of Louis of Tarento, that the arrogance and exactions of the queen's enemies had finally become intolerably wearisome to everybody; that a conspiracy in favor of Joanna and her husband, which had its origin in the University of Naples, had spread in all directions throughout the kingdom, and that discord was rife in the foreign army. The indefatigable councillor pursued his journey to Naples, visiting every inch of territory, town or country, proclaiming everywhere the queen's acquittal, her marriage to Louis of Tarento, and the indulgences promised by the pope to all those who should join in giving a heartfelt welcome to their lawful sovereigns. When he found that the people rose as one man as he passed, crying, "long live

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Joanna, and death to the Hungarians!" he returned to his masters, and told them what he had seen of the disposition of their subjects.

Joanna borrowed money wherever she could negotiate a loan, and equipped a number of galleys; on the tenth of September, 1348, she sailed from Marseilles with her husband and sister and their two faithful councillors, Acciajuoli and Spinelli.

The harbor of Naples being in the hands of the enemy, the king and queen did not venture in, but landed at Santo-Maria-del-Carmine, near the mouth of the Sebeto River, where they were welcomed by the frantic acclamations of a vast multitude. Thence, accompanied by all the Neapolitan nobility, they proceeded to the palace of Signor Ajutoris near Porta Capuana, all the castles within the city being held by the Hungarians. But Nicolas Acciajuoli, at the head of the queen's forces, laid siege to these strongholds to such good purpose, that half of the enemy were compelled to surrender, while the other half took flight and scattered through the interior. We will not follow Louis of Tarento in his laborious progress through Puglia, Calabria and the Abruzzi, where he recovered one by one the fortresses occupied by the Hungarians. After an exhibition of unexampled gallantry and patience, he had made himself master of almost all the considerable places, when affairs suddenly took on a new face, and the god of war turned his back on him a second time. A German officer named Warner, who had deserted from the Hungarian army to sell his services to the queen, sold himself back again to his former masters, and allowed himself to be surprised at Corneto by Conrado Lupo, the King of Hungary's viceroy; he then openly joined him, taking with him the greater

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number of the adventurers who were fighting under his orders. This unforeseen defection compelled Louis of Tarento to return to Naples, and it was not long before the King of Hungary, learning that his troops had rallied around his standard once more, and were only awaiting his return to march upon the capital, disembarked at Manfredonia with a large body of horsemen, and after seizing Trani, Canosa, and Salerno, laid siege to Aversa.

It was a startling blow for Joanna and her husband. The Hungarian army consisted of ten thousand horse and seven thousand foot, and the town was defended by but five hundred men, commanded by Giacomo Pignatelli. Notwithstanding the tremendous disparity of numbers, the Neapolitan general repelled the assault with great vigor; and the King of Hungary, fighting in the front rank, was wounded in the foot by an arrow. Anticipating difficulty in carrying the place by assault, he resolved to starve the garrison out. For three long months the besieged held out, performing prodigies of valor whenever occasion offered; but continued resistance was impossible, and it was a question simply whether they would capitulate, or would prefer to die to the last man. Renard de Baux, who was expected to arrive from Marseilles with a fleet of ten galleys, to defend the ports of the capital, and cover the queen's flight, if the Hungarian army should gain possession of Naples, was detained by contrary winds. Everything seemed to conspire to favor the enemy. Louis of Tarento, whose generous soul recoiled at the thought of shedding the blood of his brave followers in an unequal and desperate struggle, nobly offered to sacrifice himself, and proposed to the King of Hungary that they should decide their quarrel in single combat. Following are

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the letter of Joanna's husband, and the reply of Andrew's brother.

"O, illustrious King of Hungary, who hast invaded our kingdom; we, by the grace of God, King of Jerusalem and Sicily, do challenge you to single combat. We know that you care no more for the death of your lancers and the other heathens who march in your ranks, than if they were dogs; but we, who do abhor the ills which may befall our soldiers and men-at-arms, desire to fight with you alone, and thereby end the present war, and restore peace to our realm. That one of us which shall survive the other shall be king. And, that the duel may be fought without hindrance, we suggest that it take place at Paris, in the presence of the French king, or at Perouse or Avignon, or at Naples. Select one of these four places, and reply forthwith."

The King of Hungary, having consulted his council, replied in these terms:

"Great King, we have read and taken cognizance of the letter you did send us by the bearer of these presents, and your challenge to single combat has caused us supreme pleasure; but we do not approve either of the places you prescribe, because we do distrust them all, and for several reasons. The King of France is your maternal ancestor, and although we also are his kin, the relationship is not so close. The city of Avignon, although it in name belongs to the sovereign pontiff, is the capital of Provence, and has always been under your domination. Nor have we greater confidence in the city of Perouse, because that city is devoted to you. As to the city of Naples it cannot be necessary that we should write that we reject it, since you are well aware that it is in rebellion against us, and that you reign there. But if you really wish to fight with us, let it be

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in the presence of the Emperor of Germany, who is the supreme master, or of the King of England, who is a friend to both, or of the Patriarch of Aquileia, who is a good Catholic. If, however, you like not the places which we suggest, we make this other suggestion, to put an end to all pretexts for delay. We shall soon be in your neighborhood with our army; do you come out from your camp, and I from mine, and we can fight our duel to the death in presence of our armies."

Nothing more was heard of this challenge after the interchange of letters. The garrison of Aversa capitulated after an heroic resistance; and it was only too clear that if the King of Hungary should arrive under the walls of Naples, he would have no need to risk his own life to gain possession of the city. Fortunately the Provençal were in the harbor at last. The queen and her husband had barely time to embark, and seek refuge at Gaëta, before the Hungarian army appeared before Naples. The city was on the point of opening its gates, and had sent envoys to the king to sue humbly for peace; but such was the overbearing insolence of speech of the Hungarians, that the indignant people took up arms, and prepared to defend their homes with the madness of despair.

While the Neapolitans were standing their ground against the enemy at the Capuan Gate, a strange scene was taking place at the other end of the city, a description of which will aptly fill out our picture of this epoch of deeds of savage violence, and of unspeakable treachery.

Charles of Durazzo's widow was lying concealed in Castello del Uovo, awaiting in mortal anxiety the arrival of the galley which was to bear her to her sister's side. Poor Maria, clasping to her breast her weeping

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little ones, deathly pale, with disheveled hair, staring eyes and tightly shut lips, listened with painful intentness to every sound, alternating between hope and dread. Suddenly a heavy step was heard in the corridor, and a friendly voice called her name; Maria fell on her knees with a cry of joy; it was her preserver.

Renaud de Baux, admiral of the Provençal fleet, came forward respectfully, followed by his eldest son Robert, and his chaplain.

"Oh! Lord, I thank thee," cried Maria, rising to her feet; "we are saved!"

"One moment, Madame," rejoined Renaud, checking her impulsive speech with a wave of the hand; "you are saved, but only on one condition."

"Condition!" exclaimed the astonished princess.

"Listen, Madame; the King of Hungary, the avenger of the murder of his brother Andrew, and himself the murderer of your husband, is at the gates of Naples; the Neapolitan soldiers and people will soon bend the knee to him after one last heroic struggle; soon the victorious army will spread desolation and death around by fire and sword. Ah! this time the Hungarian executioner will not spare his victims; he will put mothers to death before the eyes of their children, and children in the very arms of their mothers. The drawbridge of this castle is in place, and no one thinks of guarding it; every man who can hold a sword is at the other side of the city. Woe to you, Maria of Durazzo, if the King of Hungary should chance to remember that you preferred his rival to him!"

"But have you not come to rescue me, in heaven's name?" cried Maria, in an agony of apprehension. "Did not Joanna, my sister, order you to take me to her?"

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"Your sister is no longer in a position to give orders," retorted Renaud with a derisive smile. "She had nothing but thanks for me for having saved her life, as well as her husband's, who fled like a dastard at the approach of the man whom he dared to challenge to single combat."

Maria gazed searchingly at the admiral as if to make sure that her eyes did not deceive her, and that it was really he who spoke with such scorn of his masters; alarmed beyond measure by the imperturbability of his countenance she said, in a mild voice:

"As it is to your generosity alone that I shall be indebted for my own life and my children's, I shall be grateful to you a thousandfold. But let us hasten, Signor Count; for I fancy every moment that I hear vindictive shouts, and you surely would not willingly leave me to fall a prey to my cruel foe?"

"God forbid, Madame! I will save you at the peril of my own life; but, as I have already told you, I shall exact conditions."

"What are they?" asked Maria with forced resignation.

"That you wed my son this very instant in the presence of our reverend chaplain."

"Insolent!" exclaimed Maria, recoiling, her face crimson with anger and shame; "dost thou dare speak thus to the sister of thy lawful queen? Give thanks to God that I choose to attribute the outrage to the temporary aberration of thy intellect, and try by thy devotion to blot thy unseemly conduct from my remembrance."

The count, without a word of reply, motioned to his son and the priest to follow him and prepared to leave the room. As he was crossing the threshold, Maria

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rushed to his side, and with clasped hands entreated him in God's name not to abandon her.

Renaud stopped.

"I might take my revenge," he said, "for the affront you put upon me by refusing my son's hand so haughtily; but I resign the task to Louis of Hungary, who will take care that it is well performed."

"Mercy for my poor children!" cried the princess; "have mercy on them at least, if my tears move you not."

"If you loved your children," retorted the admiral with a frown, "you should have taken a different course."

"But I do not love your son," cried Maria in a voice which was still proud, though it trembled pitifully. "Oh! my God, dost Thou permit the tenderest sentiments of a poor woman's heart to be thus outraged? In heaven's name, my father, do you, a minister of truth and justice, impress upon this cruel man that one can not call God to witness an oath which is torn from one's weakness and despair!"

Turning to the admiral's son, she continued, sobbing bitterly:

"You are young, perhaps you have loved; doubtless you will love some day. Oh! I appeal to your youthful loyalty of heart, to your knightly courtesy, to every noble impulse of your soul; add your prayers to mine to turn your father from his hateful project. You never saw me before; you do not know whether in the depths of my heart I love some other man. Your pride ought to revolt to see a poor weak woman so shamefully treated, who casts herself at your feet, imploring mercy and protection. A word from you, Robert, and I will bless you every moment of my life, the memory of your goodness

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will be graven on my heart as that of my guardian angel, and my children will learn to repeat your name every evening, praying God to gratify your every wish. Oh! you will save me, will you not? and then—who knows—perhaps hereafter I will love you—with real love!"

"I must obey my father," muttered Robert, without lifting his eyes to the fair suppliant's face.

The priest said nothing. A few moments passed, during which these four stood motionless as statues carved at the corners of a tomb, each absorbed in his own thoughts. Three times during that awful pause was Maria tempted to throw herself into the sea. But a confused, distant murmur suddenly fell upon her ear; it came gradually nearer and nearer until they could hear the voices of women rushing through the streets, shrieking:

"Fly! fly! fly! God has abandoned us, the Hungarians are in the city."

The wailing of Maria's children echoed the cries, and little Margaret, holding out her arms to her mother, expressed her terror in words beyond her years. Renaud without a glance at this affecting picture drew his son toward the door.

"Stop!" said the princess, putting forth her hand with a solemn gesture; "as God sends no other means of succor for my children, it must be His will that I should be the sacrifice."

She knelt in front of the priest, bending her head like a condemned criminal offering her neck to the headsman's axe. Robert de Baux took his place at her side, and the priest pronounced the words which made them one forever, and consecrated the infamous mockery with a sacrilegious benediction.

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"It is all over," murmured Maria, gazing tearfully at her daughters.

"No, it is not all over," was the admiral's harsh retort, as he forced her toward the door of another apartment; "before we take our departure the marriage must be consummated."

"Oh! where is God's justice?" cried the princess in heart-rending tones, as she fell fainting to the floor.

Renaud de Baux steered with his fleet for Marseilles, where he hoped to secure the coronation of his son as Count of Provence, by virtue of his strange marriage with Maria of Durazzo. But his dastardly treachery was not destined to go unpunished. A furious storm arose and drove him toward Gaëta, where the queen and her husband had but just arrived. Renaud ordered his men to keep in the offing, threatening to throw all objectors overboard. The crew confined themselves to murmuring at first, but soon defiant cries arose from all parts of the ship, and the admiral, seeing that his power was gone, passed from threats to entreaties. The princess, however, who had recovered her courage at the first clap of thunder, dragged herself upon the deck, shrieking:

"Help, Louis! help, my nobles! death to the villains who have perpetrated a cowardly outrage upon me!"

Louis of Tarento leaped aboard a small boat, followed by half a score of his most gallant knights, and reached the galley by dint of hard work at the oars. At a breath Maria told her story, and turning to the admiral as if to defy him to say a word in his own defence, she overwhelmed him with a withering look.

"Miserable wretch!" cried the king, as he threw himself upon the traitor, and ran him through with his sword.

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He loaded with chains the admiral's son and the unworthy priest who had been his accomplice in the hateful outrage which Renaud had expiated by his death, and taking the princess and her daughters in his boat, returned to the harbor.

Meanwhile the Hungarians, having forced one of the gates of Naples, were marching in triumph toward Castel-Nuovo; but, as they crossed the Piazza del Corregio, the Neapolitans discovered that the horses were so weakened and their riders so exhausted by their arduous labors at the siege of Aversa that a breath would have sufficed to scatter such an army of phantoms. Emboldened by this discovery, their panic-stricken terror changed suddenly to audacity, and they rushed upon the victors and forced them back outside the walls they had just forced their way through. This instantaneous popular reaction subdued the pride of the King of Hungary and made him more amenable to the advice of Clement VI., who at last deemed it to be his duty to intervene. A truce was concluded in the first place, to extend from February, 1350, to the first of April, 1351; and the following year it became a definitive peace, upon the payment of three hundred thousand florins by Joanna to the King of Hungary to defray the expense of the war.

After the departure of the Hungarians a legate was sent by the pope to crown Joanna and Louis of Tarento, and the twenty-fifth of May, the day of Pentecost, was set apart for that solemn function. All the historians of the period speak enthusiastically of that magnificent fête, the details of which have been preserved for all future ages by Giotto's pencil, in the frescoes of the church, which received on that occasion the name of the *Incoronata*. A general amnesty was proclaimed,

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extending to all those who had taken part on either side in the preceding wars, and frantic shouts of joy welcomed the king and queen as they rode in solemn state beneath the canopy, followed by all the nobles of the realm.

But the general joyousness of the day was marred by an accident which seemed to the superstitious populace ominous of evil to come. Louis of Tarento, mounted upon a richly caparisoned steed, had just ridden through the Porta-Petruccia, when some ladies who were watching the procession from their windows, threw flowers down upon the king in such profusion that his horse was frightened, and reared and broke the rein. Louis, finding that he could not control him, leaped agilely to the ground, but the crown fell from his head and was broken in three pieces. The only daughter of Joanna and Louis died on the same day. The king, however, was determined that no indications of mourning should cast a shadow upon the brilliant festival, and by his command the jousting and tournaments were continued for three days; he also instituted the order of the *Knights of the Knot*. But from that day his life was naught but a long series of disappointments. After he had fought in Sicily and Puglia, and put down the rebellion of Louis of Durazzo, who ended his days in the dungeons of Castello dell' Uovo, Louis of Tarento, worn out by dissipation, devoured by a wasting illness, and overwhelmed by domestic unhappiness, succumbed to a malignant fever on June 5, 1362, at the age of forty-two. His body had not been laid away in the royal sepulchre at St. Domenico before several claimants were disputing for the queen's hand.

The Infant of Majorca, the handsome youth whom we have mentioned heretofore, carried off the prize from all his rivals, including the son of the King of France.

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Jayme, of Aragon, had one of those sweet, sad faces which generally prove irresistible to the fair sex. Crushing misfortunes nobly borne had cast a deathlike shadow over his youth; he had passed thirteen years immured in an iron cage, and when finally released from that terrible durance by the aid of a false key, he had wandered from court to court, seeking help to recover his property; it was even said that he had known what it was to be obliged to beg a crust of bread to eat. The young stranger's beauty and the story of his adventures made a deep impression upon both Joanna and Maria years before at the court of Avignon. Maria especially had conceived a passion for the infant which was the more violent in proportion to the efforts she made to conceal it.

As soon as Jayme arrived at Naples, the unfortunate princess, who had been married with a dagger at her throat, so to speak, determined to repurchase her freedom with a crime. Followed by four armed men she entered the dungeon where Robert de Baux was still expiating the outrage which was much more his father's work than his. Maria halted in front of him, with folded arms; her cheeks were pale as death, and her lips trembled. It was a terrible interview. The princess it was who played the threatening part now, and the young man who begged for mercy. Maria was deaf to his entreaties, and soon the bleeding head of the ill-fated youth rolled at her feet, while her menials hurled the headless trunk into the sea. But God did not leave the murder unpunished; for Jayme preferred the queen to her sister, and Charles of Durazzo's widow reaped naught from her crime but the contempt of the man she loved, and a crushing remorse which brought her, still but a girl, to the tomb.

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Joanna took to husband one after the other, Jayme, of Aragon, son of the King of Majorca, and Otho, of Brunswick, of the imperial house of Saxony. We shall pass rapidly over these years, and hasten on to the final catastrophe of this tale of crime and expiation.

Jayme continued to lead a stormy life, far from his wife, and after maintaining a long struggle in Spain against Peter the Cruel he died near Navarre in the last days of 1375.

Otho, who could not escape the infliction of the divine vengeance which held a heavy hand upon the court of Naples, bravely shared the queen's fate to the bitter end.

As she had no legal heirs Joanna had adopted her nephew Charles della Pace, so-called in commemoration of the peace of Treviso. He was the son of Louis of Durazzo who rose in revolt against Louis of Tarento, and perished miserably in the dungeons of Castello dell' Uovo. The child would have shared his father's fate had not Joanna interceded for him. She heaped marks of favor upon him and married him to Margaret, daughter of her sister Maria, and Charles of Durazzo.

Grave disputes subsequently arose between the queen and one of her former subjects, Bartolomeo Prignani, who had become pope as Urban VI. Angered by the queen's opposition to his projects, the pope said one day in a fit of temper that he would send her to spin in a convent. Joanna, in revenge for that insult, openly favored the claim of the "anti-pope" Clement VII. and offered him shelter in her own castle when he fled to Fondi, pursued by Urban's troops.

But the people, having risen against Clement, slew the Archbishop of Naples, who had taken an active part in his election, broke the cross which was being borne in

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procession before the anti-pope, and gave him barely time to go aboard a galley and set sail for Provence.

Urban declared that Joanna had forfeited her crown, released her subjects from their oath of allegiance and bestowed the crown of Sicily and Jerusalem upon Charles della Pace, who marched upon Naples at the head of eight thousand Hungarians. The queen, who could not credit such ingratitude, sent his wife Margaret with her two children out to meet him, although she might have retained them as hostages. The children were Ladislas and Joanna, afterward the second queen of that name. The victorious army soon arrived before Naples, and Charles besieged the queen in her castle, forgetting, the ingrate, that she had saved his life and loved him like a mother.

During the siege which ensued Joanna endured hardships which the soldiers most hardened to the fatigues of war could not endure. She saw her faithful retainers fall all about her, exhausted by hunger, or mowed down by fever. After the besiegers had cut off all her supplies they threw putrefying bodies into the fortress every day, to infect the air which she breathed. Otho was detained at Aversa with his forces; Louis of Anjou, brother of the King of France, whom she had appointed her successor to the exclusion of her nephew, failed to come to her assistance, and the Provençal galleys which Clement VII. had promised to send her were destined not to appear in the harbor until all was lost. Joanna requested a suspension of hostilities for five days, at the end of which time she promised to surrender the castle if Otho had not come to her rescue.

On the fifth day Otho's army appeared in the direction of Piedigrotta. The battle was desperately and stubbornly contested on both sides, and Joanna stationed on

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the summit of a tower, was able to follow the cloud of dust raised by her husband's horse wherever the combat raged most fiercely. For a long time the result was uncertain; but at last the prince in his eagerness to meet his enemy in hand to hand conflict pressed forward so gallantly to where the royal standard waved, and made his way to the very centre of the army with such headlong impetus, that he was at once hemmed in on all sides, and streaming with sweat and blood, his sword broken in his hand, he was compelled to surrender. An hour later Charles wrote to his uncle the King of Hungary that Joanna was in his power, and that he awaited his Majesty's commands concerning the fate of his prisoner.

It was a lovely May morning. The queen was under guard in the castle of Aversa; Otho had obtained his liberty on condition that he should leave Naples; Louis of Anjou, having finally got together an army of fifty thousand men was marching in all haste to reconquer the kingdom. None of these facts were known to Joanna who had been living for some days in complete isolation. The beautiful springtime had dressed in their brightest colors those enchanted plains which so well deserve the name of *campagna felice*—the blest and happy land. The orange-trees, covered with their fragrant snow-white blossoms, the ruddy-cheeked fruit of the cherry, the olives with their tiny emerald leaves, the red bell-shaped flowers of the pomegranate, the wild mulberry, the evergreen laurel, and an endless variety of hardy, vigorous shrubs, which have no need of the hand of man to tend and foster them in nature's favored climes, formed a boundless garden, intersected here and there with narrow, deserted paths, bordered by green hedges, and watered by

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underground streams. It was like a corner of Eden dropped and forgotten in this lovely spot.

Joanna, leaning upon her windowsill, was breathing in the delicious perfumes of spring, and letting her tear-dimmed eyes wander restfully over the broad expanse of greenery and flowers. A light breeze, laden with pungent odors, played upon her burning brow, and brought a refreshing coolness to her feverish cheeks. Melodious voice in the distance, singing the refrain of some familiar ballad, alone broke the silence of her poor chamber, the lonely nest, in which the most brilliant and stormiest existence of that stormy age, was coming to an end in tears and penitence.

The queen slowly passed her whole life in review from her earliest recollections. Fifty years of deception and suffering! First she thought upon her peaceful and happy childhood, the blind devotion of her grandfather, the pure and innocent pleasures of that period of purity and innocence, and the noisy sports of her little sister and her tall cousins. And how she shuddered at the first thought of marriage, of restraint, of the loss of liberty, and of the bitter regrets sure to follow it; she remembered with a thrill of horror the lying words which were whispered in her ear, to sow in her young and untaught heart the seeds of corruption and vice which had poisoned her entire life; the scorching memory of her first love, the perjury and desertion of Roberto di Cabane, the delirious moments passed like a dream in the arms of Bertrand d'Artois, and the whole of that terrible drama with the tragic ending, stood out in lines of fire against the dark background of her sombre thoughts. Then cries of anguish rang in her ears, as on that awful night of death. It was the voice of Andrew begging for mercy from his murderers. A long death-

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like silence followed the agonizing struggle, and then the queen saw the horrifying procession of carts on which her accomplices were being put to the torture, pass before her eyes. All that followed was one continuous round of persecution, flight, exile, remorse, chastisement from heaven, and maledictions from her fellowmen. Her loneliness was intolerable; husbands, lovers, friends, relatives, all whom she had loved or hated on earth had ceased to live; her joys and her sorrows, her desires and her hopes, all had vanished forever.

The poor queen, driven to desperation by these harrowing pictures of desolation and woe, shook off her abstraction with a violent effort, and kneeling before a *prie-Dieu* wept bitterly and prayed with the utmost fervor. She was still beautiful despite the extreme pallor of her face; the noble outlines of her head were no less perfect than of yore; the fire of repentance made her lovely black eyes gleam with more than human brilliancy, and the hope of divine forgiveness caused a heavenly smile to play about her lips.

Suddenly the door of the room in which Joanna was praying with such exemplary earnestness creaked heavily on its hinges; two Hungarian nobles, encased in armor, made their appearance and motioned to the queen to follow them. She rose without speaking and obeyed; but a cry of anguish escaped from the very bottom of her heart when she recognized the spot where Andrew and Charles of Durazzo had both died a violent death. She recovered her courage, however, and asked, calmly, why they had brought her to that place.

The only reply they vouchsafed was to show her a rope of silk and gold thread—

"Let God's justice be done!" cried Joanna, falling upon her knees.

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Five minutes later she had ceased to suffer.

It was the third corpse which had been thrown over the balcony at Aversa.*

*The main fact, as well as the details, of this narrative are scrupulously accurate. We have consulted the different versions of Giannone, Summonte, Villani, Rainaldo, Palmieri, Collenuccio, Spondano, Gataro, and especially the Latin chronicle of Domenico Gravina, a contemporary writer.

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THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK.

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THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK.

It will soon be one hundred years since this interesting problem first began to exercise the imaginations of the romancist and dramatist, and the patience of the historian. There is no subject more shrouded in mystery, and at the same time more generally discussed. It is a sort of legend which no one can explain, but in which everyone believes. This prolonged captivity, attended by such extraordinary precautions, always arouses involuntary compassion and a sort of terror which one cannot argue away, and the mystery which surrounds the victim tends to augment the pity he inspires. Perhaps if the real hero of this mournful tale were certainly known, he would already be forgotten. To give the poor wretch a name would consign him to the ranks of commonplace unfortunates, who very quickly exhaust their claims upon our interest and our tears. But this individual, cut off from the world, where no trace of him can be discovered, and where his disappearance left no void; this captive, doomed to undergo an unprecedented punishment, and who was confined in a prison within a prison, as if the walls of a dungeon were not sufficiently secure, seems a poetical personification of suffering, upon whom were visited all the tortures that tyranny could invent, all possible human misery.

Who was this masked man? What was the career which he exchanged for this life of silence and seclusion? Was it the dissolute life of the courtier, the

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intrigues of the diplomat, the scaffold of the state criminal, or the renown of the warrior? What had he renounced? Was it love, or glory, or the throne? What causes of regret had he for whom hope had ceased to exist? Did he breathe curses, call down imprecations upon his persecutors, and blaspheme God, or did his feelings find vent in the sighs of a patient, resigned soul? The same misfortune affects different individuals in different ways according to their several natures; and when one transports himself in imagination beneath the dark arches of Pignerol and Exilles, when one imagines himself immured at Ile Sainte-Marguerite, or at the Bastille, successive witnesses of that long agony, one must needs rely upon conjecture, picture the prisoner according to one's own fancy and sympathies, and judge what his sufferings must have been from one's own emotions. One would gladly fathom his solitary reflections, feel the beating of the heart which gave life to that animate machine, and seek for the marks of the tears which flowed behind that impenetrable mask. The imagination is fired at the thought of that enforced dumbness, of that lifetime of reflections which the features did not betray, of that isolation for forty years confined within double walls of stone and iron. It thereupon ascribes majestic proportions to the object of its revery, connects this mysterious existence with the most exalted interests, and persists in seeing in the prisoner the victim of a momentous secret of state, sacrificed it may be to the tranquillity of the people and the well being of the monarchy.

Does more mature reflection qualify this first impulsive judgment? Does it consign this conviction to the grave of other poetic illusions? I do not think so. It seems to me on the contrary that in this case reflection

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confirms the impulse of the imagination. Is it not, in very truth, natural to suppose that a secret kept so many years by dint of such extraordinary precaution and perseverance, as to the age and name and face of the prisoner, must have been dictated by a most potent political necessity? Mere human passions, anger, hatred, vengeance, are not so inveterate and long-enduring. Even cruelty will not explain such orders. Suppose Louis XIV. to have been the most cruel of princes, had he not a thousand varieties of torture to select from, instead of inventing this strange punishment? Why should he have imposed upon himself voluntarily the necessity of maintaining these endless precautions and untiring surveillance? Must he not have been in a state of perpetual uneasiness throughout his reign lest the solution of this terrible enigma should some day find its way out from the walls in which it was confined? And yet he respected the life of a captive so difficult to keep watch upon, and so dangerous to be discovered! Death administered in secret would have avoided all this, but he did not choose to order it. Is this hatred, or anger, or passion of any sort? Surely not! and the inevitable conclusion from the whole proceeding is that the measures taken against the prisoner were dictated by some purely political emergency; that the king's conscience, which was reconciled to such a rigorous course as was strictly necessary to ensure secrecy, could not decide to go farther, nor to cut short the days of a poor fellow, who in all probability was guilty of no crime.

Courtiers are not accustomed to bow to the ground before their master's foe; and so the consideration, the respect shown the masked prisoner by Saint-Mars, the governor of the fortress, and the minister Louvois, seem to establish both the innocence of that personage, and

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his eminent rank. For my own part I make no pretensions to the erudition of the dealer in old books, and I have never been able to see in the story of the man in the iron mask aught but a detestable abuse of power, a crime so abominable that it is horrible to think that its perpetrators were never punished.

When M. Fournier and myself undertook some years since to represent this episode upon the stage, we read with great care and compared the different versions which had been put forth up to that time. Two additional versions have appeared since the successful production of the drama at the Odéon; one is a letter from M. Billiard, addressed to the Historical Institute, in which he reproduces the narrative adopted by us after Soulavie; the other is the work of the bibliophile Jacob, who advances a novel theory, and gives evidence of the most thorough research, and an immense amount of reading. His work, however, has not shaken my conviction. If it had appeared before the production of the drama, I should still have followed the theory which I preferred in 1831, not only because it is incontestably the most dramatic, but because it is in my view the only probable one, as it alone has in its favor all the moral presumptions which are of such great weight in a matter of this sort where everything is obscure and uncertain.

It may be said perhaps that writers for the stage are too easily allured by the marvelous and the pathetic; that they are inclined to sacrifice logic to effect, and the approval of the judicious to the applause of the pit. But it may fairly be said in answer that the pedants too often sacrifice too much to their love of exact dates, or the interpretation of some obscure passage, which discussion does not clear up, or the ingenious art of grouping

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figures and patching together scattered phrases from a dozen or more old books.

This strange captivity is as interesting a subject of study and as important to be explained on account of its harsh accompaniments and its long duration, as on account of the problematical motives which induced it. In circumstances where mere erudition is not sufficient, and where each delver among the old texts has to take from his successor the same flat contradiction that he administered to his predecessor, one must follow the guidance of some other light than that of learning, and it will appear from an examination of all the theories that no one of them rests upon an impregnable foundation.

The question to be solved concerning the man in the iron mask is twofold. The first enigma: "Who was the masked man?" is followed by this other: "Why was his unprecedented punishment prolonged until death?" And then, if silence is to be imposed upon the imagination, it must be by positive, mathematical demonstration, and not by simple induction.

Without maintaining and asserting that the Abbé Soulavie has raised the veil which concealed the truth, I am convinced, I say again, that no other theory is preferable to his, or grounded upon stronger presumptions. I do not derive this immovable conviction from the very great and prolonged success of the drama, but from the facility with which all the other theories may be made to refute and demolish one another. If it were not in some sort an affair of conscience with me, I might very easily (the elements of success in a book being altogether different from those in a drama) have woven a most entertaining romance out of the alleged intrigue of Buckingham with the queen, or have imagined a

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secret marriage between Anne of Austria and Cardinal Mazarin, on the authority of a book of Saint-Mihiel's which the bibliophile says that he has not read, although it certainly is not rare or difficult to obtain. I might likewise have paraphrased the drama, and reproduced here, to play the same parts with less elaboration, the historical characters whose names are sometimes disguised and their proportions exaggerated in the version prepared for the stage, although their actions are there invested with an appearance of probability. Whatever fable one might invent, whatever combinations one might resort to, it would be impossible to lessen the interest aroused by the various narratives that have been written concerning the Iron Mask, and the details, almost invariably contradictory, of writers or witnesses, all of whom claim to be possessed of most accurate information upon the subject. It cannot well be otherwise, for every work that has appeared upon the subject, even those of no merit, or less than none, has been instantly successful; such, for instance, as a nondescript production of the Chevalier de Mouhy, a sort of scribbling bully in Voltaire's pay, which was published anonymously at the Hague by Peter von Hondt in 1746, in six small volumes, under the title of *The Iron Mask, or the Wonderful Adventures of the Father and Son;* and an absurd novel by Regnault-Warin, and another by Madame Guénard, published in four volumes at Paris in 1837.

On the stage, the author was obliged to adopt a definite theory. He yielded to the inflexible laws of logic; he followed out his first thought, and whatever embarrassed him or stood in his way was thrust aside. The book, on the other hand, is written to arouse discussion. We place before the reader the documents in a law-suit

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which has not yet been definitely decided, and which probably never will be except in the event of some fortunate accidental discovery.

The first who mentioned the prisoner was the anonymous author of the *Mémoires de Perse*, published at Amsterdam in 1745, in one duodecimo volume, by the company of associated booksellers.*

"Having no other purpose," says the author (second edition, page 20) "than to relate *facts which are not known, or which have not hitherto been published, or which it is impossible to pass over in silence*, we pass to an incident *known to but few*, concerning Prince Giafer (Louis de Bourbon, Comte de Vermandois, son of Louis XIV. and Mademoiselle de la Valliere) whom Ali-Homajou (the Duc d'Orléans, Regent) visited in the fortress of Ispahan (Bastille), where he had been *several years* a prisoner. This visit probably had no other object than to assure himself of the existence of a prince supposed to have died of the plague thirty years before, and whose obsequies were performed in the presence of a whole army.

"Cha-Abas (Louis XIV.) had a legitimate son, Sephi-Mirza (Louis, Dauphin of France), and a natural son, Giafer. These two princes, whose characters were as different as the stations of their respective mothers, were always rivals, and always quarreling. One day Giafer forgot himself so far as to strike Sephi-Mirza. Cha-Abas, being informed of the insult put upon the heir of his crown, assembled his most trusted advisers, and laid before them the heinous conduct of the culprit, who deserved death according to the law of the land. But one of the councillors, who was more considerate than the others of Cha-Abas' feelings, conceived the plan of

*Note 1.

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sending Giafer to the army, which was then on the frontier of Feldran (Flanders), giving out that he was dead a few days after his arrival, transporting him by night with the utmost secrecy to the castle on the island of Ormus (Sainte-Marguerite), while his obsequies were being celebrated in the sight of the army, and keeping him in perpetual confinement.

"This plan was approved, and was executed by faithful and discreet persons; the prince, whose premature death was lamented by the army, was taken by unfrequented roads to the island of Ormus, and placed in the custody of the commandant there, who had been ordered beforehand not to allow any person whomsoever to look upon his prisoner. A single servant who was cognizant of this secret of State, was killed *en route* by the escort, who disfigured his face with their daggers, so that he might not be recognized.

"The commandant of the castle of Ormus treated his prisoner with the most profound respect; he waited upon him in person, and received the dishes at the door of his apartments from the cooks, no one of whom ever saw Giafer's face. One day it occurred to the prince to cut his name on the back of a plate with his knife. A servant, into whose hands the plate fell, thought to do himself a service by carrying it to the commandant, and flattered himself that he would be handsomely rewarded; but the poor fellow was sadly mistaken, for he was made away with at once, so that his knowledge of so momentous a secret might be buried with him.

"Giafer remained several years at the castle of Ormus. He was removed therefrom only to be transferred to Ispahan; at that time Cha-Abas, in acknowledgment of the commandant's faithful performance of the duty

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imposed upon him, gave him the governorship of Ispahan, which fell vacant opportunely.

"The precaution was taken, as well at Ormus as at Ispahan, of compelling the prince to wear a mask, when it was necessary to expose him to the sight of any stranger because of sickness, or for any other reason. Several credible persons have said that they saw the masked prisoner several times, and that he said "thee" and "thou" to the governor, who, on the other hand, treated him with infinite respect.

"If the question be asked why Giafer, having long survived Cha-Abas and Sephi-Mirza, was not set at liberty, as it would seem that he should have been, it must be remembered that it was not possible to reinstate in his rank and dignities a prince whose tomb was still standing, and of whose obsequies there were not only living witnesses but documentary proofs, the authenticity of which could by no conceivable means have been impeached in the minds of the people, who believe to-day that Giafer died of the plague in camp in Flanders. Ali-Homajou died soon after his visit to Giafer."

This version, which is the original source of all the controversy upon the subject, was at first generally adopted. It tallied in some respects, and before it was subjected to critical examination, with events which took place during the reign of Louis XIV.

The Comte de Vermandois did in fact set out for the camp of the army of Flanders a short time after his reappearance at court, whence the king had banished him because he had been detected in *Italian* debauches with several young noblemen.

"The king," says Mademoiselle de Montpensier (*Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier*, Volume XLIII, page 474 of the second series of *Mémoires Relatifs*

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à l'Histoire de France, published by Petitot) "was ill-pleased with his conduct, and refused to see him. The young prince, who caused his mother much sorrow, but who was so well preached at that he was believed to have become a most exemplary man, remained at court only four days, reached the camp before Courtray early in November, 1683, was taken ill in the evening of the twelfth, and died on the nineteenth of a malignant fever."

Mademoiselle de Montpensier says that he was made ill "by drinking too much brandy."

There is no lack of flaws of every sort to be found in this explanation.

In the first place, if during the four days of his re-appearance at court—so brief an interval that it was a simple matter to know how he employed his time—the Comte de Vermandois had struck the Dauphin, such a heinous outrage would unquestionably have been known to everybody, and it is mentioned nowhere except in the *Mémoires de Perse*.

The difference of age between the two princes makes it even more improbable that the blow was struck. The Dauphin, born November 1, 1661, and father of the Duc de Bourgogne, who was born August 6, 1682, was twenty-two years old, six years the senior of the Comte de Vermandois. But the most complete refutation is contained in a letter from Barbézieux to Saint-Mars, written August 13, 1691:

"When you have aught to write to me touching the prisoner who has been in your custody for *twenty years*, I pray you use the same precautions as when you wrote to M. de Louvois."

The Comte de Vermandois, who died officially in 1683, could not have been a prisoner for twenty years in 1691.

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Six years after the masked man was thus brought to the notice of story-tellers, Voltaire produced, under the pseudonym of M. de Francheville, his *Siecle de Louis XIV* (2 volumes, 8vo., Berlin, 1751). The work, which had long been expected, was at once devoured for details concerning the mysterious prisoner who was on everybody's tongue.

Voltaire ventured at last to refer to the prisoner more explicitly than had hitherto been done, and to assign a place in history to "an event of which all previous historians have been in ignorance" (first edition, Vol. II, Chap. XXV, page 11); he assigned a date to the beginning of the imprisonment "a few months after the death of Cardinal Mazarin" (1661); he drew the portrait of the unknown, who was, according to him, "above middle height, young, with noble and very handsome features, and an admirable figure; his skin was rather dark, and the mere sound of his voice aroused one's deep interest; he never complained of his lot, and never gave the slightest intimation as to who he might be;" he did not forget to describe the mask, the chin-piece of which had steel-springs, so that the prisoner could eat with the mask upon his face; lastly, he fixed the date of the prisoner's death; "he was buried," he said, "by night in the parish churchyard of Saint-Paul, in 1704."

Voltaire's account reproduced the principal circumstances of that given in the *Mémoires de Perse*, excepting the fable of the imprisonment of "Giafer." When the prisoner was sent to Ile Sainte-Marguerite in charge of Saint-Mars, "a trustworthy officer," he wore his mask *en route;* and his escort were ordered to kill him if he removed it. The Marquis de Louvois visited him, and addressed him standing with a degree of consideration

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which was close upon respect. In 1690 he was taken to the Bastille, where he enjoyed the most luxurious accommodations which that fortress afforded; no request of his was refused; his most pronounced taste was for linen of the finest texture, and lace. He played upon the guitar. His table was served with the best of everything, and the governor rarely sat in his presence.

Voltaire added several other details furnished him by M. de Bernaville, Saint-Mars' successor, and by an old physician of the Bastille, who had attended the prisoner in various illnesses, and had never seen his face, "although he had often examined his tongue and the rest of his body." He also asserted that M. de Chamillart was "the last minister who knew the strange secret," and that when the Maréchal de La Fenillade, his son-in-law, besought him on his knees to tell him who the Iron Mask was, Chamillart on his death bed (1721) replied that he had sworn never to reveal the secret. Voltaire accompanies his narration of these details which were vouched for by the Duc de La Fenillade, with this very noteworthy statement:

"A fact which adds greatly to the mystery is that WHEN THIS UNKNOWN MAN WAS SENT TO ILE SAINTE-MARGUERITE, NO PERSONAGE of PROMINENCE DISAPPEARED FROM THE EUROPEAN STAGE."

The suggestion of the Comte de Vermandois had been treated as an "absurd and fanciful anecdote, wherein not even probability is considered," by Baron C—— (Crunyngen, according to P. Marchard), in a letter inserted in the number for June, 1745, of the "Annotated Library of the works of the learned men of Europe," but the discussion was revived, and certain scholars in Holland put forth an opinion founded to some extent (as all the theories are for that matter), upon history.

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THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK

Louvois addressed him with respect.

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According to this latest version the masked prisoner was a young foreigner of noble birth, gentleman of the chamber to Anne of Austria, and the actual father of Louis XIV. This fable had its origin in a book published by Pierre Martean at Cologne in 1692, and entitled: "The Loves of Anne of Austria, wife of Louis XIII., and M. le C. D. R., the actual father of Louis XIV., King of France, wherein is set forth at length what steps are adopted to secure an heir to the crown, the springs which are set in motion to that end, and finally the dénouement of the comedy."

This libellous production went through five editions, 1692, 1693, 1696, 1722, 1738. The edition of 1696 bore beneath its title the name of Cardinal de Richelieu instead of the initials C. D. R. But this is clearly a printer's error, as may be seen by reading the book. Some have thought that the letters were intended to refer to the Comte de Rivière, while others read Comte de Rochefort, whose mémoires were written by Sandras de Courtilz.

"This narrative," says the author, an Orangist scribbler in the pay of King William, "solves the great and iniquitous mystery touching the true paternity of Louis XIV. Although it may be novel and strange here, it is perfectly well known in France. The acknowledged indifference of Louis XIII. the extraordinary circumstances attending the birth of Louis Dieudonné, so-called because he was born after twenty-three years of sterile wedded life, without taking into account several other noteworthy facts, prove so clearly and conclusively that his genesis was borrowed, that one must have a vast store of effrontery to maintain that he owed his birth to the prince who was supposed to be his father. The famous barricades of Paris, and the formidable revolt against

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Louis XIV. on his accession to the throne, which was supported by men of great distinction, were such a public pronouncement of his illegitimate birth, that it was on everybody's tongue; and as reflection showed the justice of the charge, there was hardly a person who had any doubts or scruples on the subject."

This cleverly conceived fable was, in a few words, as follows:

"Cardinal de Richelieu, observing with pride the love of Gaston, Duc d'Orléans, the king's brother, for his niece Parisiatis (Madame de Combalet) formed the plan of bringing about a marriage between them. Gaston, insulted at such a suggestion, made no other reply than to deal the cardinal a box on the ear; thereupon Père Joseph craftily hinted to the minister and his niece to deprive Gaston of the succession, which the acknowledged impotence of Louis XIII. seemed to assure him. They introduced into Anne of Austria's bedroom, le C. D. R., a young man whose unoffending, hopeless passion for her the queen had already noticed. Anne of Austria, a widow, though her husband was alive, offered but a feeble resistance, and the next day went to the cardinal, and said:

"'Well! you have won your unrighteous cause; but look to it, Monsieur le cardinal, that I do not lack the divine pity and forgiveness which you with your pious sophisms have led me to believe that I shall enjoy. Look to the welfare of my soul, I charge you, for I am in despair!'

"The *liaison* was continued and it was not long before the glad news of the queen's pregnancy was made known to the nation. Thus was born Louis XIV., son of Louis XIII. by transubstantiation. If this narrative interests the public," says the pamphleteer, "the sequel will soon

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follow, containing the catastrophe that befell le C. D. R., and the end of his pleasures, which cost him dear."

Notwithstanding the great success of this first portion the sequel never appeared. It must be confessed that such a tale (which however convinced no one of the illegitimacy of Louis XIV.) was nevertheless an excellent prologue to the misfortunes of the masked prisoner, and contributed doubtless to augment the interest and curiosity attaching to this mysterious episode. The opinion of the Dutch pundits found few defenders and was soon laid aside for a new idea.

Lagrange-Chaucel was the third historian who spoke of the prisoner confined at Ile Sainte-Marguerite. He was eighty-nine years old, when he was so aroused by Fréron's hatred for Voltaire that he wrote from his château of Antoniat in Périgord a letter to the *Literary Year* (Vol. III, page 188) which refuted the version adopted in the *Siècle de Louis XIV*, and cited facts which his own imprisonment in the places where the masked man was confined twenty years earlier had put him in the way to learn.

"My sojourn at Ile Sainte-Marguerite," says Lagrange-Chaucel, "where the detention of the Iron Mask had ceased to be a State secret at the time of my arrival, enabled me to gather some details which a more accurate chronicler than M. de Voltaire might have ascertained as well as myself, if he had taken the pains to inquire. This extraordinary occurrence which he assigns to the year 1662, a few months after the death of Cardinal Mazarin, did not happen until 1669, eight years after his eminence's death. M. de la Molte-Guérin who was governor of the islands at the time of my detention there, assured me that the prisoner was the Duc de Beaufort, who was said to have been killed at the siege of Candia,

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and whose body never was found, according to the chronicles of the time. He also told me that Monsieur de Saint-Mars, who obtained the governorship of the islands after leaving Pignerol, showed great consideration for the prisoner; that he always served him in person from silver plate, and often furnished him with clothes of as expensive material as he seemed to wish; that, when he was so ill as to require the services of a physician or surgeon, he was enjoined, on peril of his life, not to appear in their presence without his iron mask, and that, when he was alone, he was allowed to pull out hairs from his beard with steel pincers very highly polished. I saw one pair that he used for this purpose in the possession of Monsieur de Formanoir, Saint-Mars' nephew, and lieutenant of a free company employed to guard the prisoners. Several persons have told me that when Saint-Mars went to take over the governorship of the Bastille, whither his prisoner accompanied him, the latter, who was wearing his iron mask, was heard to ask: 'Has the king designs on my life?' 'No, MY PRINCE,' Saint-Mars replied, 'your life is safe; you have only to do as you are bid.'

"I learned further from one Dubuisson, who was employed as cashier by the famous Samuel Bernard, and who was taken to Ile Sainte-Marguerite after spending some years at the Bastille, that he was with certain other prisoners in a room directly above that occupied by the unknown, and that they were able to converse and exchange reflections with him through the flue in the chimney; but that when he was asked why he persisted in keeping silence as to his name and adventures, he replied: 'that to disclose them WOULD COST HIM HIS LIFE, as well as those to whom he revealed his secret.'

"Whoever he may have been, inasmuch as the name

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and quality of this victim of political necessity are no longer secrets in which the State is interested, I have thought that by giving to the public such facts as have come to my knowledge, I might check the torrent of theories which everyone is inventing for himself as the spirit moves him, on the word of an author who has acquired a great reputation for the marvelous, related with an atmosphere of truth which is much admired in his works, even in the 'Life of Charles XII.'"

This theory, according to the bibliophile Jacob, is more reasonable than the others.

"Beginning in 1664," he says, "the Duc de Beaufort, by his insubordination and levity had compromised the success of several naval expeditions. In October, 1666, Louis XIV. reproved him with much considerateness, and urged him to seek to increase his usefulness to him by cultivating the talents which he indubitably possessed, and avoiding in future the mistakes that had sometimes marked his conduct in the past. 'I doubt not,' he added, 'that you will realize that you are the more indebted to me for this mark of good-will, in that there are few examples of kings who have dealt thus with a subject.' (Works of Louis XIV., Vol. V, page 388.) I might cite several instances in which the Duc de Beaufort was a sad detriment to the royal navy. M. Eugene Sue's *Histoire de la Marine*, which contains a mass of new and interesting information, very accurately describes the position of the 'King of the Markets,' with respect to Colbert and Louis XIV. Colbert sought to direct from his closet all the manœuvres of the fleet commanded by the *Frondeur* duke with all the inconsequence of his grumbling, bullying nature (Eugene Sue, first volume, *pièces justificatives*). In 1669 Louis XIV. sent the Duc de Beaufort to relieve Candia, which was

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besieged by the Turks. Beaufort was slain in a sally on June 26, seven hours after his arrival. The Duc de Navailles, who was associated with him in the command of the French squadron, says simply: 'He fell in with a detachment of Turks who were pressing close upon some of our troops; he placed himself at their head, and fought valiantly; but he was abandoned, and *no one has ever been able to discover what became of him.*' (*Mémoires of the Duc de Navailles*, book IV, page 243.)"

The news of his death spread swiftly through France and Italy, and divers funeral orations were pronounced in the course of the magnificent obsequies at Paris, Rome and Venice. But, inasmuch as his body was not found among the dead, many people believed that he would reappear.

Guy Patin in two letters mentions this opinion, which he did not share, but which seems to have had some followers.

"Several people are willing to wager that Monsieur de Beaufort is not dead! *O utinam!*" (Guy Patin, September 26, 1669.)

"They say that Monsieur de Vivonne has been commissioned Vice-Admiral of France for twenty years; but there still are those who will have it that Monsieur de Beaufort is not dead, but is a prisoner on some Turkish island. Let him who will believe it; for my own part I believe him dead, and am glad that I am not myself as certainly so." (Id., January 14, 1670.)

The objections to this theory are thus stated by Jacob.

"Several narratives of the siege of Candia, written by eye-witnesses and printed at the time, stated that the Turks, according to their custom, cut off the Duc de Beaufort's head upon the battlefield, and that it was exposed at Constantinople; whence the details repeated

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by Sandras de Courtilz in the *Mémoires du Marquis de Montbrun*, and the *Mémoires d'Artagnan;* and indeed it may well be that the naked, headless body was not recognized among the dead. M. Eugene Sue in his *Histoire de la Marine* (Vol. II, Chap. VI) had adopted this supposition, conformably to the narrative of Philibert de Jarry and the Marquis de Ville, who left letters and manuscript memoirs, now in the king's library.

"But without dwelling upon the danger and difficulties of an abduction which the scimeter of the Ottoman might any day render useless, I will confine myself here to the positive declaration that the correspondence of Saint-Mars from 1669 to 1680 * is utterly inconsistent with the supposition that the Governor of Pignerol had in his custody any notable prisoner of State other than Fouquet and Lauzun."

Without adopting the opinion of the learned critic on this last point, we may add to the arguments adduced by him the improbability that Louis XIV. would have thought it worth while to adopt such harsh measures against the Duc de Beaufort. *Frondeur* and hectoring bully though he was, the duke was not such a menace to the royal power that it was called upon to punish him secretly; and in another aspect, it is impossible to believe that Louis XIV., peaceably seated on his throne and triumphant over all the foes of his minority, would have cared to persecute the old rebels of the Fronde in the person of the Duc de Beaufort.

Furthermore, to complete the demolition of this theory, the bibliophile calls attention to the fact that the alleged fondness of the Man in the Iron Mask for fine linen and lace, his habitual reserve, and his extreme refinement, accord but ill with the decidedly coarse and brutal

*Note 2.

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portrait which the historians have left us of the "King of the Markets."

As to the argument founded upon the anagram of the word Marchiali, from which the words *hic amiral* can be formed, we are not inclined to think that the jailers at Pignerol amused themselves by propounding riddles to the keen wit of their contemporaries; moreover the anagram would be equally applicable to the Comte de Vermandois, who was appointed admiral at the age of twenty-two months.

The Abbé Papon, making a trip through Provence, writes thus concerning the Iron Mask, whose place of confinement he visited:

"It was this Ile Sainte-Marguerite, to which was taken toward the close of the last century the famous *prisoner in the iron mask*, whose name it is probable will never be known; there were only a very few persons, and those connected with his service, who were permitted to speak with him. One day when M. de Saint-Mars was talking with him, standing outside his door in a sort of corridor, so that he could see those who approached when they were at a distance, the son of one of his friends arrived and walked toward the spot where he heard voices. The governor as soon as he saw him closed the door of the room, hurried to meet the young man, and asked him with a disturbed air if he had heard aught. As soon as he was assured of the contrary, he sent him away again the same day and wrote to his friend that the adventure came within an ace of costing his son dear, and that he was sending him home lest he should be as imprudent again.

"I had the curiosity, on February 2, 1778, to enter the ill-starred prisoner's room; it was lighted by one window only, on the northern side, looking on the sea,

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and fifteen feet above the sentry's walk; the window was cut in a very thick wall, and was provided with three iron bars set at equal distances apart; the space between the sentry and the prisoner was some twelve feet. I found in the castle an officer of the free company, seventy-nine years old; he told me that his father, who served in the same company, had often told him that one day a barber spied something white floating in the water under the prisoner's window. He secured it and took it to Monsieur de Saint-Mars; it was a shirt of the finest linen, carelessly folded, on which the prisoner had written from one end to the other.

"Monsieur de Saint-Mars, having unfolded it and read a few words, seemed much disturbed, and asked the fellow if he had not been led by curiosity to read what was written thereon. He protested again and again that he did not read a word; but two days later he was found dead in his bed. This fact the officer had heard vouched for so many times by his father and the castle chaplain of that day that he considered it unquestionably true. The following seems to me equally certain, judging from all the evidence which I collected on the spot, and in the monastery of Lérins, where the tradition is preserved.

"They desired to find a woman to wait upon the prisoner, and a good wife from the village of Mongin offered her services, thinking that she saw an opportunity to make her children's fortunes; but when she was told that she must give up all thought of seeing them, and must abandon all fellowship with the rest of mankind, she refused to be immured with a prisoner, whose society must be purchased at so high a price. I ought to say also that sentinels were stationed at the corners of the fortress on the side towards the sea with instructions to

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fire upon any boat that should approach within a certain distance.

"The person who waited upon the prisoner died at Ile Sainte-Marguerite. The brother of the officer I have mentioned, who was in certain matters Monsieur de Saint-Mars' man of confidence, often told his son that he went into the prison at midnight, took the dead man on his shoulders and carried him so to the place of burial; he thought that it was the prisoner himself who was dead, but it proved to be as I say, the man who waited upon him, and it was at that time that they sought a woman to take his place."

The Abbé Papon published some interesting particulars, theretofore unknown; but as he mentioned no name his narrative called for no refutation. Voltaire did not reply to Lagrange-Chaucel, who died the same year. Fréron, burning to be revenged for the insulting portrait Voltaire had drawn of him in *L'Écossaise*, raised up a more formidable adversary against him. Sainte-Foix put forward a theory, altogether novel, suggested to him by a passage in Hume. He wrote in the *Literary Year* (1768, Volume IV), that the masked prisoner was the Duke of Monmouth, natural son of Charles II. of England, convicted of the crime of armed rebellion, and beheaded at London, July 15, 1685.

The following is the passage referred to from the English historian:

"The good-will of the people still followed him in every fortune. Even after his execution, their fond credulity flattered them with hopes of seeing him once more at their head. They believed that the person executed was not Monmouth, but one who, having the fortune to resemble him nearly, was willing to give this proof of his extreme attachment, and to suffer death in his stead."

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The very great attachment of the English people to the Duke of Monmouth, and the idea which the young prince had that the nation only awaited a leader to expel James II., led him to embark upon an undertaking which might perhaps have been successful, had it been conducted with more prudence. He disembarked at Lyme in Dorsetshire, attended by only one hundred and twenty men; six thousand at once joined him; some cities declared in his favor, and he caused himself to be proclaimed king, maintaining that his birth was legitimate, and that he had evidence of the secret marriage between Charles II. and Lucy Walters, his mother. He fought a battle with the king's army, and the victory was almost won, when his powder and ball gave out. Lord Gray, who commanded his cavalry, basely deserted him. The ill-fated Monmouth was made prisoner, taken to London, and sentenced to lose his head July 15, 1685.

The details published in the *Siècle de Louis XIV.* concerning the personal appearance of the masked prisoner are consistent with the supposition that he was the Duke of Monmouth, who was very attractive physically. Sainte-Foix collected everything that was accessible in the way of evidence to support his theory, and made the most of the following passage from an anonymous romance, entitled "The Amours of Charles II. and James II. Kings of England:"

"On the night of the *pretended* execution of the Duke of Monmouth, the king, accompanied by three men, went himself to the Tower. They covered the duke's head with a hood, and the king and the three men entered a carriage with him."

He also asserted that shortly after the death of Monmouth Père Tournemine went with Père Saunders,

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confessor of James II., to pay a visit to the Duchess of Portsmouth, who took occasion to say that she should always blame King James for allowing Monmouth to be executed, in violation of the oath he swore upon the host, beside the death-bed of Charles II., who urged him never to put his natural brother (sic) to death, even though he should rebel against him. Père Saunders quickly rejoined:

"King James kept his word."

This solemn oath is also mentioned by Hume, but it must be observed that the historians are not in agreement upon this point. The universal history of Guthrie and Gray, and the history of England of Rapin Thoyras and Barrow have nothing to say upon the subject.

"An English surgeon named Nelaton," so wrote Sainte-Foix, "who frequented the Café Procope, the usual place of resort of men of letters, used often to tell this story: he said that he was once first assistant to a surgeon at the Porte Sainte-Antoine, and one day he was sent for to bleed a patient, and was taken to the Bastille; the governor ushered him into a room where there was a prisoner who complained of a terrible headache; this prisoner spoke with an English accent, was dressed in a black and yellow dressing gown with great gold flowers, and did not show his face which was hidden by a long napkin tied behind his head."

This argument amounted to but little; it was hardly possible to mistake a napkin for a mask, and furthermore there was a surgeon, a physician and an apothecary at the Bastille, and no one was admitted there without an order from the minister; even the *viaticum* was excluded unless the permission of the lieutenant of police was obtained.*

* Note 8.

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This theory at first met with no contradiction, and bade fair to be triumphantly established as the true one, owing, it may be, to the pugnacious and intolerant character of Sainte-Foix, who could ill-brook criticism, whom no one was anxious to irritate, and whose sword was even more redoubtable than his pen.

It was known that Saint-Mars on his way with the prisoner from Ile Sainte-Marguerite to the Bastille, made a halt at his estate of Palteau in Champagne. Fréron sought information from a grand-nephew of Saint-Mars, the then proprietor of Palteau, who replied in the *Literary Year* for June, 1768:

"As it would seem by the letter of Monsieur de Sainte-Foix, from which you send me an extract, that the Man in the Iron Mask still exercises the imaginations of your writers, I will give you such information as I can concerning him. He was known at Ile Sainte-Marguerite by no other name than La Tour. The governor and the other officers showed him every consideration, and he obtained whatever they could allow a prisoner to have. He often walked abroad, but always with a mask over his face. I never heard it said until after M. de Voltaire's *Siècle* appeared, that the mask was of iron and provided with springs; perhaps my informants forgot to mention that fact to me; but he wore the mask only when he went out to take the air, or when he was in the presence of some stranger.

"Monsieur de Blainvilliers, an officer of infantry who had access to Monsieur de Saint-Mars both at Pignerol and Ile Sainte-Marguerite, told me more than once that La Tour's hard lot aroused his curiosity to such a degree that, in order to gratify it, he assumed the arms and the uniform of one of the soldiers who did sentry duty in a gallery under the windows of the room

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occupied by the prisoner at Ile Sainte-Marguerite; that from that point he saw him very plainly without his mask; that his face was very pale, but he was tall and well proportioned except that his legs were a little too thick at the ankle; his hair was white although he was in the prime of life. He passed almost the whole of that night walking back and forth in his cell. Blainvilliers added that he was always dressed in brown, that he was furnished with fine linen and with books, that the governor and officers remained standing in his presence, and uncovered, until he bade them put on their hats and be seated, and that they often sat with him and dined with him.

"In 1698 Monsieur de Saint-Mars was transferred from Ile Sainte-Marguerite to the Bastille. On his way to his new post he made a brief stay with his prisoner at his estate of Pulteau; the masked man arrived in a litter preceding that of Monsieur de Saint-Mars; they were accompanied by several mounted men. The peasants went out to meet their lord. Monsieur de Saint-Mars dined with his prisoner, who sat with his back towards the windows of the dining-hall which looked upon the courtyard. The peasants whom I questioned were not able to see whether he wore his mask when he ate, but they saw very plainly that Monsieur de Saint-Mars, who was seated opposite him, had two pistols beside his plate. They were served by a single valet de chambre, to whom the various dishes were delivered in the ante-room, he taking great care to close the door of the dining-hall after him. When the prisoner passed through the courtyard, he had the black mask upon his face. The peasants noticed that they could see his teeth and lips, that he was tall, and that his hair was white. Monsieur de Saint-Mars slept in a bed close beside that

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THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK

M. de Saint-Mars made him sit at table with face unmasked.

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occupied by the masked man. Monsieur de Blainvilliers told me that when he died, in 1704, he was buried secretly at Saint-Paul's, and that quicklime was put in the coffin to consume the body. I never heard it said that he had a foreign accent."

Sainte-Foix refuted this narrative put forth in the name of Monsieur de Blainvilliers, or at least he seized upon one point in the letter to prove that the prisoner could not be the Duc de Beaufort. He recalled an epigram of Madame de Choisy: "Monsieur de Beaufort would be very glad to bite, but cannot." Therefore it was not he whose teeth the peasants saw through the mask. His theory seemed to be generally accepted until Père Griffet, Jesuit, confessor at the Bastille, devoted to the Iron Mask the twelfth chapter of his "Treatise concerning the different kinds of evidence which serve to establish the truth in history." (Liège, 12mo., 1769.) He was the first to quote from an authentic document which actually asserted the existence of this masked man, whose identity had been so long discussed. Père Griffet produced an extract from the manuscript journal of Monsieur Dujonca, *lieutenant du roi* at the Bastille in 1698, and from the mortuary records of the parish Church of Saint-Paul.

"Thursday, September 8, 1698," says Dujonca, "at three in the afternoon, Monsieur de Saint-Mars, governor of the Bastille, made his first appearance, coming from Ile Sainte-Marguerite and Honorat, having with him in his litter a prisoner who was formerly in his custody at Pignerol, *whose name was not entered*, who was *made to wear a mask all the time*, and who was confined at first in the Tour de la Bassinière, until nine o'clock in the evening, when I myself transferred him to the third cell in the Tour de la Bertaudière,* which

* Note 4.

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I had taken care to furnish with everything needful* before his arrival, having received orders to that effect from Monsieur de Saint-Mars. When I conducted him to the said cell, I was accompanied by Monsieur Rosarges, whom Monsieur de Saint-Mars had brought with him; he was charged with the duty of waiting upon the prisoner, whose table was furnished by the governor, and of attending to his wants."

Dujonca's journal reports the prisoner's death in these words:

"Monday, November 19, 1703. The unknown prisoner, who came from Ile Saint-Marguerite hither with M. de Saint-Mars, in whose charge he had been so long—the man who was always masked with a mask of black velvet—was somewhat worse yesterday as he came away from mass, and he died at ten o'clock this evening, without apparently being seriously ill. M. Guirant, our chaplain, confessed him yesterday. Death came so suddenly that he had not time to receive the sacrament, but our chaplain exhorted him a moment before he died. He was buried Tuesday, November 20, at four o'clock in the afternoon, in the cemetery of Saint-Paul, our parish. His burial cost forty livres."

His name and age were concealed from the parish priests. The death register has naught but the following:

"1703, November 19, Marchiali, age about forty-five, died at the Bastille; his body was buried in the cemetery of Saint-Paul, his parish, on the 20th of the present month in presence of M. Rosarges, and of M. Reilh, surgeon-major of the Bastille, who have signed their names hereto: Rosarges, Reilh."

As soon as he was dead, it is certain that they burned up substantially everything that he had used, as linen,

*Note 5.

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clothes, mattresses, bedclothing, and even the doors of his cell, the bedstead and chairs. His silver plate was melted down, and the walls of the cell he occupied were scraped and whitened. They even carried their precautions so far as to raise the flagging of the floor for fear that he might have hidden a note, or made some mark which might disclose his identity.

Père Griffet, after combatting the opinions of Lagrange-Chaucel and Sainte-Foix, seemed to incline toward the theory adopted in the *Mémoires de Perse*, which, in his view, had never been refuted by unanswerable proofs. He concluded by saying that, in order to arrive at a definite decision it was essential to know the exact date of the prisoner's arrival at Pignerol.

Sainte-Foix hastened to reply, and to reiterate and maintain his former opinion. He sent to Arras for an extract from the records of the cathedral chapter, stating that Louis XIV. himself wrote to the chapter enjoining upon them to receive the body of the Comte de Vermandois, who died at Courtray; and that he desired the deceased to be interred in the middle of the choir of the cathedral, in the same vault with Elisabeth, Comtesse de Vermandois, wife of Philippe d'Alsace, Count of Flanders, who died in 1182. It is not to be believed that Louis XIV. would have selected a family tomb as the place to bury a log of wood.

Sainte-Foix was not familiar with Barbézieux's letter of August 13, 1691, which we cited above to refute the Vermandois theory. The same letter also demolishes the theory which Sainte-Foix made popular, for the Duke of Monmouth was condemned in 1685. It could not have been of him that Barbézieux wrote in 1691: "The prisoner who has been in your custody for TWENTY YEARS."

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The same year in which Sainte-Foix congratulated himself upon having triumphantly established his theory, Baron von Heiss put forward another in a letter dated at Phalsbourg, June 28, 1770, and addressed to the *Journal Encyclopédique*. He annexed a letter translated from the Italian, and inserted in the "Abridged History of Europe," by Jacques Bernard, which was published by Claude Jordon at Leyden from 1685 to 1687, in detached sheets. It was stated in that letter (August, 1687, Article *Mantua*) that the Duke of Mantua designed to *sell* his capital to the King of France, but his secretary dissuaded him, and induced him to join the other Italian princes in opposition to the ambition of Louis XIV. The Marquis d'Arcy, French ambassador at the court of Savoy, having been informed of the secretary's schemes, overwhelmed him with attentions, entertained him frequently, and finally invited him to join a large hunting expedition two or three leagues from Turin. They set out together; but, at a short distance from the city, they were surrounded by twelve horsemen, who carried off the secretary, *disguised him, put a mask upon him, and took him to Pignerol*. The prisoner did not remain long in that fortress, *which was too near Italy, and although he was very carefully watched they feared that the walls might speak*, so he was transferred to Ile Sainte-Marguerite, "where he now is, in custody of M. de Saint-Mars."

This theory, which was destined to appear again at a later day, did not produce a great sensation at first. It is certain that the Duke of Mantua's secretary, one Matthioli, was arrested in 1679 through the agency of the Abbé d'Estrade and Catinat, was taken to Pignerol with the utmost secrecy, and confined there in the custody of M. de Saint-Mars; but he must not be confounded with the Iron Mask.

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Catinat says of Matthioli in a letter to Louvois:

"No one knows the name of this *knave*."

Louvois wrote to Saint-Mars:

"I admire your patience which permitted you to await orders to treat a scoundrel as he deserves, when he failed to show proper respect to you."

Saint-Mars replied:

"I have instructed Blainvilliers to show him a cudgel and say to him 'that that is used to bring the flighty to their senses.'"

At another time Louvois wrote:

"You must make the clothes of *that sort of people* last three or four years."

Assuredly this is not the unknown prisoner who is treated with so much consideration, in whose presence Louvois bared his head, and who is provided with fine linen, lace, etc., etc.

Furthermore Saint-Mars' correspondence seems to indicate that this unfortunate creature, being confined in the same cell with an insane Jacobite, eventually went mad himself, and died toward the end of the year 1686.

Voltaire, who should perhaps be credited with being the first to open this inexhaustible mine of controversy, held his peace, and took no part in these discussions. When all the theories had been put forth he undertook to refute them all. In the seventh edition of the "Philosophical Dictionary," he jeered unmercifully at the idea that Louis XIV. would have been so obliging as to act as police-sergeant and jailer, first for King James II. and afterwards for King William and Queen Anne, with whom he was at war. Persisting in assigning the beginning of the captivity of the Iron Mask to 1661 or 1662, he controverted the opinion of Lagrange-Chaucel, and

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also that of Père Griffet which was in agreement with the *Mémoires de Perse.*

"All these delusions being swept away," he said, "it remains to ascertain who this prisoner was, who was *always masked,* and at what age he died. It is plain that, if he was not allowed to walk in the courtyard of the Bastille, and if he was not permitted to speak to his physician *without his mask,* it was because there was danger that a *too striking* resemblance might be detected in his features: he could show his tongue, but never his face. As to his age, he said himself to the Bastille apothecary shortly before his death, that he thought he was about sixty; and Monsieur Marsoban, Maréchal de Richelieu's surgeon, who afterwards served the Duc d'Orléans, regent, in that capacity, and who was the apothecary's son-in-law, has told me so more than once. The writer of this article is better informed perhaps than Père Griffet. He will say no more."

This article in the "Philosophical Dictionary" was followed by an addendum by the publisher, attributed by the publishers of Kelh to Voltaire himself. (*Questions sur l'Encyclopédie, distribuées en forme de dictionnaire,* Geneva, 1791.) The publisher, who is also called the author, rejects summarily all the theories which were under discussion, including Baron Heiss'. According to this publisher's idea the Iron Mask was an elder brother of Louis XIV. He was the son of Anne of Austria by a lover, and his birth undeceived the queen as to her fancied barrenness. After her secret *accouchement* a scheme was cleverly arranged by Cardinal Richelieu's advice, whereby the king was absolutely forced to occupy the same room with his wife. A second son was the result, and Louis XIV. until he attained his majority was ignorant of the existence of his illegitimate brother.

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The policy thereupon adopted by him, affecting deep respect for the honor of the French royalty, saved the crown from great embarrassment and Anne of Austria's memory from a horrible scandal, by inventing *wise and just* means of burying in oblivion the living token of an illicit love. The king was thereby relieved from committing an act of cruelty, which a *less conscientious and less noble-minded* monarch than Louis XIV. might have deemed *a necessity.*

After this deliverance Voltaire did not again revert to the subject of the Iron Mask. The theory advanced by him overturned that of Sainte-Foix. Voltaire was initiated into this secret of state by the Maréchal de Richelieu. May we not suppose that his natural indiscretion led him to say what he knew under the shelter of an assumed name, or at least to put forth a version which approximated the truth, and that his subsequent silence was due to the fact that he realized or had impressed upon him the dangerous meaning of his words?

Was this prince, who was transformed into the masked prisoner, an illegitimate brother, or was he a twin brother? The first theory was maintained by M. Quentin Crawfurd; the second was put forth by the Abbé Soulavie in the *Mémoires of Maréchal de Richelieu.* In 1783 the Marquis de Luchet, in the *Journal des Gens du Monde* (Volume IV, No. 23, page 282, et seq.), imputed to Buckingham the honor of the disputed paternity. In support of this opinion he quoted the testimony of a certain Mademoiselle de Saint-Quentin, a former mistress of the minister Barbézieux, who died at Chartres about the middle of the eighteenth century, and who had stated openly that Louis XIV. condemned his elder brother to lifelong imprisonment, and that the *perfect*

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resemblance between the two brothers necessitated the invention of the mask for the prisoner.

The Duke of Buckingham, who came to France in 1625 to escort to England Henriette of France, sister of Louis XIII., affianced to the Prince of Wales, did, it is true, manifest the most ardent affection for the queen, and it seems certain that she was not insensible to the passion she inspired. An anonymous publication (*La Conference du Cardinal Mazarin avec le Gazetier*, Brussels, 1649) goes so far as to say that Anne of Austria fell madly in love with him; that the duke visited her even when she was in bed; that he took her glove from her hand, and vain-gloriously exhibited it to several persons at court, to the king's vast displeasure. An anecdote which was never contradicted relates that one day Buckingham's language to the queen, in the presence of her *dame d'honneur*, the Marquise de Senecey, became so passionate, that the latter said to him: "Hush, Monsieur; a queen of France may not be addressed thus." This new version fixed the birth of the masked man in the year 1637 at the latest, but the assignment of any positive date would negative the possibility of Buckingham's paternity, as he was assassinated September 2, 1628.

At the time of the fall of the Bastille the masked prisoner once more became an object of fashionable interest. On the thirteenth of August, 1789, the last issue of the *Loisirs d'un Patriote français* announced that the anonymous editor had seen with several other documents found at the Bastille a card containing the meaningless number 64389000, and the following memorandum: FOUQUET ARRIVING FROM ILE SAINTE-MARGUERITE WITH AN IRON MASK; followed by X X X, and below, the word *Kersadion*. The journalist imagined that

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Fouquet had succeeded in escaping, had been recaptured, and condemned to wear a mask and to be reported dead as a punishment for his escape.

This theory produced some little impression; and it was recalled that in the supplement to the *Siècle de Louis XIV.* Chamillart was made to say that "the Iron Mask was a man who knew all of M. Fouquet's secrets." But the authenticity of the card has never been established, and it can hardly be admitted upon the simple assertion of an anonymous journalist.

When writers were no longer compelled to secure the king's approval and permission to publish their thoughts, every day brought forth some new *brochure* concerning the Iron Mask. Louis Dutens (*Correspondance interceptée*, 1789) reproduced the theory of Baron Heiss, and supported it by facts which were no less novel than strange. He adduced proof that Louis XIV. had caused the abduction of a minister of the Duke of Mantua, who was imprisoned at Pignerol. Dutens bestowed upon the victim the name of Girolamo Magni. He also quoted from a memoir drawn up, at the suggestion of the Marquis de Castellane, governor of Ile Sainte-Marguerite, by one Souchon (probably indentical with the officer whom Papon questioned in 1778), son of a man who was a private in the free company stationed on the island in Saint-Mars' time, and then some seventy-nine years old. This memoir relates circumstantially the abduction (in 1679) of the masked prisoner, whom it calls "a minister of the Empire," and states that "the prisoner died at Ile Sainte-Marguerite nine years after his disappearance."

Dutens thereby deprived the episode of the marvelous element which Voltaire had imparted to it, and cited the testimony of the Duc de Choiseul, who, having

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failed to extort the secret of the Iron Mask from Louis XV., begged Madame de Pompadour to try her hand, and learned from her that the prisoner was the *minister of an Italian prince.* At the same time that Dutens declared that "there is no one fact in history more conclusively established than that the prisoner in the iron mask was a minister of the Duke of Mantua, abducted from Turin," M. Quentin-Crawfurd was insisting that he was a son of Anne of Austria. Some years before the advocate Bouche (*Essai sur l'histoire de Provence*, 2 vols., quarto, 1785) had treated this story as a mere fable invented by Voltaire, and opined that the prisoner was *a woman.* Thus we see that the continued discussion threw no light upon the subject, and the confusion grew constantly worse confounded.

In 1790 appeared the *Mémoires du Maréchal du Richelieu*, who had entrusted his memoranda, his correspondence and his library to the hands of Soulavie. Before we place before the reader the extract from these memoirs which treats of the Iron Mask, and which has in its favor strong moral presumptions, whatever one may say, if not absolute certainty, and has proved convincing to the great majority of people, we will say a word or two, from memory only, of two other theories which could not withstand scrutiny.

According to a manuscript memoir of M. de Bonac, French ambassador at Constantinople in 1724, the Armenian patriarch Arwedicks, a mortal enemy of our religion, and the responsible author of the cruel persecutions suffered by the Catholics, was exiled at the solicitation of the Jesuits, and carried off by a French vessel, to be taken to France and there *consigned to a prison from which he could never be set free.* Arwedicks was taken to Ile Sainte-Marguerite, *and thence to the Bastille,*

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where he died. The Turkish government persistently demanded the release of the patriarch until 1723, and the French cabinet always denied any share in the abduction.

If it were not known that Arwedicks was converted to the Catholic faith and died a free man at Paris, as is proved by his death certificate preserved in the archives of the foreign office, M. de Bonac's theory would be sufficiently refuted by that sentence in his manuscript which states that the patriarch was abducted during the embassy to Constantinople of M. Fériol, who succeeded M. de Châteauneuf in 1699. Now Saint-Mars arrived at the Bastille with the masked prisoner in 1698.

Several English scholars have thought with the historian Gibbon that the mysterious individual might have been Henry, the second son of Oliver Cromwell, who was held as a hostage by Louis XIV.

It is, in very truth, a strange thing that this second son of the Protector should in 1659, have vanished so completely that no one knew where he lived or where he died. But why should he have been made a prisoner of State in France, where his brother Richard was granted permission to live? In the absence of anything resembling proof, this supposition has not even the faintest probability in its favor.

We now come to the extract from the memoirs of the Maréchal de Richelieu.

"Under the late king there was a time when in all classes of society the question was constantly asked—Who was the celebrated personage known by the name of the Iron Mask? But I noticed that this curiosity abated somewhat when, after Saint-Mars brought him to the Bastille, it was said that he had orders to shoot him if he made himself known. Saint-Mars also let it be

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understood that the man who should be so unfortunate as to discover who he was would undergo the same fate. This threat to assassinate the prisoner as well as those who should pry into the secret had such an effect that the mysterious personage was only mentioned in whispers so long as the late king lived. The anonymous author of the *Mémoires Secrets de la Cour de Perse*, published abroad fifteen years after the death of Louis XIV., was the first who ventured to speak of the prisoner and relate some anecdotes concerning him.

"After that time, as the spirit of liberty manifested itself more boldly every day in France, both in society and in books, while the memory of Louis XIV. lost more and more of its former influence, people began to talk freely about this prisoner; and in these last days of my life, seventy years after the death of Louis XIV. I am still asked who the prisoner in the iron mask really was.

"That was the question which I myself propounded in 1719 to the adorable princess then beloved by the regent, but who detested him because she loved me to distraction, and because she had no warmer feeling than respect for him. However, as it was generally believed in those days that the regent knew the name and history of the mask, and the reason of his imprisonment, I, being more inquisitive and audacious than the rest, attempted to extort the great secret from the regent through the medium of my princess. She was accustomed to keep him at a distance, and show her aversion for him, but as he was passionately in love with her, and always granted whatever she asked at the first glimmer of hope that she would relent, I interested my charming princess, who was naturally very inquisitive, in my scheme, and induced her to assure the regent that she

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would respond to his passion for her if he would allow her to read the memoirs in his possession relating to the Iron Mask.

"The Duc d'Orléans had never been known to reveal a state secret. His circumspection in that respect was beyond belief, for Dubois, his preceptor, had taught him to keep such secrets to himself. It was not probable that he would give up the memoir, which might disclose the origin and rank of the masked prisoner. For that reason the princess' advances to the regent seemed to me almost hopeless; but it is impossible to say what love will not accomplish.

* * * * * *

"The regent gave into her hands the document, which she sent to me the following day enclosed in a note written in cipher, which the laws of history demand that I reproduce in full, as an essential demonstration of the authenticity of what follows; for the princess wrote to me in cipher when her subject was our mutual attachment, and in this note she told me what bargain she made in order to procure the memoir. I dare not give the details, but I may say, borrowing the modest language of the patriarchs, that if Jacob, in order to obtain the hand of that one of Laban's daughters whom he loved the best, was obliged to purchase it twice over, the regent exacted even more than the patriarch. Here is the cipher note; the historical memoir will follow:

2, 1, 17, 12, 9, 2, 20, 2, 1, 7, 14, 20, 10, 3, 21, 1, 11, 14, 1, 15, 16, 12, 17, 14, 2, 1, 21, 11, 20, 17, 12, 9, 14, 9, 2, 8, 20, 5, 20, 2, 2, 17, 8, 1, 2, 20, 9, 21, 21, 1, 5, 12, 17, 15, 00, 14, 1, 1, 5, 14, 12, 9, 21, 5, 12, 9, 21, 16, 20, 14, 8, 3.

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Narrative of the Birth and Education of the Unfortunate Prince, Sequestered from the World by Cardinals de Richelieu and de Mazarin, and Imprisoned by order of King Louis XIV.

Written by the prince's governor, on his death-bed.

"The ill-fated prince whom I brought up and watched over until near the end of my life was born September 5, 1638, at half-past eight in the evening, while the king was at supper. His brother, now reigning, was born about noon while his father was at dinner; but whereas the birth of the latter was a brilliant function, attended with great pomp and ceremony, that of his brother was cheerless and melancholy, and concealed with great care. For the king, being informed by the midwife that the queen was like to bring forth a second child, caused the chancellor of France, the midwife, the first chaplain, the queen's confessor and myself to remain in her apartments, to be witnesses of what should take place, and of what he had in mind to do if a second child should be born.

"A long time since it had been prophesied to the king that his wife would bear two sons; for several days before certain shepherds had come to Paris, saying that they were inspired from on high, and it was said in Paris that if the queen should bear two dauphins as they predicted, it would bode ill to the State. The Archbishop of Paris summoned the seers before him and caused them both to be confined at Saint-Lazare, because the people were in a ferment; which gave the king much food for thought because of the confusion into which his kingdom might be thrown. That happened which the seers had foretold, whether the constellations had really indicated it to them, or Providence chose to give his Majesty warning of the troubles which

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might be in store for France. The cardinal, who was advised of the prophecy by a messenger, replied that they must take counsel; that the birth of two dauphins was not impossible, and that if it should happen the second must be carefully hidden away, because he might, in the future, seek to be king, form a new league in the realm to dethrone his brother, and come at last to reign.

"The king was fairly ill from the suspense, and the queen's shrieks made us fear a second *accouchement*. We sent in search of the king, who nearly fell to the floor, having a presentiment that he was about to become the father of two dauphins. He said to Monseigneur, the Bishop of Chartres, whom he had begged to attend the queen; 'do not leave my wife until such time as she shall be delivered; I am in mortal dread.' Immediately after he called us together, the Bishop of Meaux, the chancellor, Monsieur Honorat, Dame Péronète the midwife and myself, and said to us in the queen's presence, so that she might hear, that we should answer to him with our heads if we disclosed the birth of a second dauphin, and that it was his will that the birth should be esteemed a secret of state, in order to prevent the disasters that might ensue, the Salic law having nothing to say as to the succession to the crown in case of the birth of two eldest sons of the king.

"That which was foretold came to pass, and the queen was delivered, while the king was at supper, of a dauphin more delicate and prettier than the first one. He kept up a continual moaning and crying as if he already regretted having come into the world, where he was destined to endure so much bitter suffering. The chancellor drew up a report of this marvelous birth, which is without parallel in our history; but his

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Majesty not being content with the first draft burned it in our presence, and ordered it to be rewritten several times until it was done to his satisfaction, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Monsieur the chaplain, who maintained that his Majesty could not conceal the birth of a prince, to which the king replied that he did it for reasons of state.

"The king then bade us sign our oath; the chancellor signed first, then the chaplain, then the queen's confessor, and I signed after him. The oath was also signed by the surgeon and the midwife who delivered the queen, and the king attached the document to the report, which he carried away, and which I have never heard mentioned since. I remember that his Majesty conversed with the chancellor concerning the form of the oath, and that he talked for a long while in an undertone of Monseigneur le cardinal; after which the midwife was entrusted with the newly-born infant. She told me that, as they were always afraid that she would talk too much upon the subject, she was often threatened with death if she should speak; we, who were present at the birth, were forbidden even to speak of the child among ourselves.

"Not one of us ever violated his oath, for his Majesty dreaded nothing that might happen after his death so much as that the flames of civil war might be kindled by these twin children, and the cardinal always kept that dread alive in him when he subsequently obtained the superintendence of the child's education. The king also ordered us to examine the ill-starred prince, (who had a wart above the left elbow, a yellowish mark on the right side of his neck, and a smaller wart on the calf of his right leg) because his Majesty, in the event of the demise of the first-born, intended, and

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very properly, to put in his place the royal child whom he placed in our keeping; wherefore he required our signatures to the report, to which was affixed a miniature of the great seal in our presence, and we signed it, in accordance with his Majesty's order, and after him. And as to the shepherds who prophesied the double birth I never heard of them again, but I never made inquiry. Monseigneur le cardinal, who took charge of the mysterious child, may have sent them out of the country.

"Concerning the childhood of the second prince; Dame Péronète treated him at first as her own child, but he was supposed to be the natural child of some great nobleman of the time, because it was plain from the care she bestowed upon him, and the amount of money she expended, that he was the cherished son of rich parents, although they had disowned him.

When the prince had grown a little, Monsieur le Cardinal Mazarin, who was entrusted with his education after Monseigneur le Cardinal de Richelieu, placed him in my charge to be reared and educated as a king's son should be, but in secret. Dame Péronète continued to discharge her duty till her death, the attachment between them being mutual, and even more marked on his part than on hers. The prince's education was conducted at my house in Bourgogne with all the care which should be bestowed upon the son and brother of a king.

"I frequently conversed with the queen-mother during the troublous times in France, and her Majesty seemed to me to live in fear that if the child's birth should ever become known during the lifetime of his brother, the young king, there would surely be some malcontents who would make it a pretext for rebellion,

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because some doctors think that the last born of twins was first conceived, and consequently he is the rightful king, while that theory is denied by others of the same profession.

"However, this fear never led the queen to destroy the written evidence of his birth, because in the event of the young king's death it was her purpose to have his brother recognized as king, although she might meanwhile have another child. She has often said to me that that evidence was carefully preserved in her chest.

"I gave the young prince such an education as I would wish to have myself, and no acknowledged king's son ever had a better. The only thing for which I have to reproach myself, is that I unwittingly brought disasaster upon the prince. At nineteen he developed an ardent longing to know who he was, and as he saw that I was determined to keep my own counsel, and that my resolution grew stronger in proportion to the frequency and fervency of his entreaties, he determined to conceal his curiosity from me in future, and to make me believe that he thought that he was my own illegitimate son; I often told him that he was mistaken when he called me 'father,' when we were alone; but I ceased finally to combat his belief (which he feigned perhaps in order to induce me to speak), letting him believe that he was my son; and he seemed content therewith, but was always seeking a way to find out who he was. Two years passed, when an unfortunate piece of imprudence on my part, for which I bitterly blame myself, afforded him the desired information. He knew that the king sent messengers to me from time to time, and I was so careless as to leave my chest in his way, which contained letters from the queen and cardinals. He read a part and guessed at the rest with his ordinary

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penetration, and he afterwards confessed to me that he abstracted the letter which was the most significant and expressive on the subject of his birth.

"I remember that he adopted a sullen, rough demeanor toward me in the place of the affectionate respect, which was the result of my training, but at first I was at a loss to discover the reason of the change; for I have never learned how he succeeded in getting into my chest, and he would never tell me what means he used, whether he was assisted by workmen, whose names he did not choose to divulge, or made use of some other agency.

"One day, however, he was guilty of the imprudence of asking me for portraits of the late king Louis XIII. and the reigning king; I replied that all those that existed were so poor that I was waiting until some better ones should be done before having them in my house.

"This answer, which was not satisfactory to him, was followed by a request for permission to go to Dijon. I learned afterwards that he wished to go there to see a portrait of the king, and to continue his journey to the then abiding-place of the court, which was at Saint-Jean de Lus in anticipation of the marriage with the Infanta, there to place himself beside his brother, and see for himself whether there was a resemblance between them. I learned of his projected journey, and left his side no more.

"The young prince at this time was as beautiful as love, and love stood him in good stead in the matter of procuring a portrait of the king; for he had been for some months in love with a young governess in the house, and he made himself so agreeable to her, that she gave him the portrait, in the face of orders prohibiting any servant from giving him anything without my permission. The unhappy youth recognized his own features, as he

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might well do since the same portrait would serve equally well for either; and the sight drove him to such frenzy that he came to me, saying: 'There is my brother, and this tells me who I am,' producing a letter from Cardinal Mazarin, which he had stolen from me. Such was the scene that took place in my house.

"My dread lest the prince should escape and hurry off to the marriage of the king made me anticipate that occurrence. I dispatched a message to the king to inform him that my chest had been opened, and to ask for new instructions. The king sent me his commands by the cardinal; he bade me seclude myself with him until further orders, and make him understand that his absurd claim was the cause of our common punishment. I have suffered with him in our prison until this moment, when I believe that the decree commanding me to take my leave of this world has been pronounced by my judge on high, and I can not refuse my ward, or my own peace of mind, some sort of declaration which will point out to him the method of securing release from his present ignominious estate, if the king should die childless. Can an oath which is forced upon one require him to maintain secrecy as to facts which are in themselves incredible, but which should be handed down to future generations?"

Such was the historical memoir which the regent delivered to the princess, and concerning which many questions at once arise. Who, it will be asked, was this governor of the prince? Was he a Burgundian, or simply the owner of an estate in Bourgogne? How far from Dijon was his estate? He must unquestionably have been a remarkable man to have enjoyed the intimate confidence of the king and queen and Cardinal de Richelieu at the court of Louis XIII. Is there anything in the records of the Burgundian peerage to inform

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us if any prominent personage of that province disappeared from society after the marriage of Louis XIV. with a young ward of some twenty years, a stranger, who had previously been in his family at his château? Why was this memoir, which was nearly a century old when it saw the light, anonymous? Was it dictated by the author on his death-bed, when he had not the strength to sign it? How did it find its way out of the prison? etc., etc.

It is certain that all these questions have never been answered, and I am disinclined to affirm the authenticity of the narrative. The Abbé Soulavie says that he questioned the marshal upon the subject one day: "Isn't it true, Monsieur le Maréchal," he said, "that this prisoner was the elder brother of Louis XIV. born without the knowledge of Louis XIII?" The marshal seemed embarrassed; he would not answer frankly, nor did he altogether refuse to answer; he said that "that famous individual was neither *the illegitimate brother of Louis XIV.*, nor the Duke of Monmouth, nor the Comte de Vermandois, nor the Duc de Beaufort, etc., as so many authors have been pleased to assert." He said that all their theories were mere dreams; but he added that the incidents described by most of them were true, and that the orders were to put the prisoner to death if he revealed his identity. At last the marshal admitted that he knew the secret; his words were: "All that I can tell you on this subject, Monsieur l'Abbé, is that the prisoner had ceased to be so interesting an object when he died in the early part of this century, at a very advanced age; but it was far different at the time when Louis XIV. began to reign upon his own responsibility, at which time he was imprisoned for weighty reasons of state."

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These words were written down upon the spot before the marshal's eyes, and as Soulavie was urging him to impart some further facts which, without directly betraying the secret, would gratify public curiosity concerning the prisoner, Richelieu replied: "Read the last deliverance of Monsieur de Voltaire upon the Mask, especially the last words, and reflect thereon."

All scholars, with the exception of Dulaure, have invariably treated Soulavie's narrative with profound contempt; we must agree that it would be a monstrous thing if it were false, and that the Abbé would be a dastardly villain, if he had invented the famous note in cipher: "Behold the great secret; to discover it I must let myself be 1, 12, 15, 14, 1, three times by 8, 3.

But, unfortunately for the champions of Mademoiselle de Valois, it is impossible to traduce her moral character or her lover's or her father's; and from what is known of all three we are justified in thinking that the more shocking the infamy attributed to them, the more probable it is. As to the objection that Louvois would not have written (as he did to Saint-Mars in 1687) of a son of Louis XIII., or an illegitimate child of Anne of Austria, in these terms: "There will be no difficulty about transferring the chevalier de Thézut from the cell where he now is in order to put your *prisoner* there, until the one you are having prepared for him is in condition to receive him"—we confess that we do not appreciate its weight. It has also been urged that Saint-Mars would not have said, in speaking of a prince,—"until he is transferred to the *cell* which is being prepared for him, which has a chapel adjoining." But why should Saint-Mars not have expressed himself thus? Does it bespeak any abatement of consideration for the prisoner, to speak of him as a prisoner, and to call a cell by its name?

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One M. de Saint-Mihiel published a volume at Strasbourg in 1791, entitled: *Le veritable homme dit au masque de fer, ouvrage dans lequel on fait connaître sur preuves incontestables, à qui le célèbre infortuné dut le jour, quand et où il naquit.** The title will afford an idea of the uncouth and barbarous style of the whole work. It would be difficult to exaggerate the smug self-satisfaction which inspires this new reader of riddles; if he had found the philosopher's stone, or made a discovery destined to change the face of the world, he could not exhibit more pride and pleasure. All things considered, however, the "incontestable proof" of his theory is no more successful in solving the question definitely and beyond risk of refutation, than the evidence adduced in support of those theories which preceded and followed his. But what he lacks more than all else is the necessary talent for setting forth and arranging his materials. With the most moderate amount of skill, he might have evolved a theory which would have endured scrutiny as well as another, and have supported it, if not by unanswerable proofs (no one has been able to produce such), by moral presumptions, which have great weight in a matter where all is mystery and obscurity, and where one always is confronted with the necessity of explaining the respectful demeanor of Louvois toward the prisoner, always standing with bared head in his presence.

According to M. de Saint-Mihiel the man in the mask was a legitimate son of Anne of Austria and Mazarin!

He shows first of all that Mazarin was a cardinal deacon, not a priest, and that he had not even taken orders, on the authority of the Princess Palatine, wife of

* The truth concerning the man called the "Man in the Iron Mask," wherein is established by incontestable proof to whom the famous unfortunate owed his birth, and when and where he was born.

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Philippe I. Duc d'Orléans (brother of Louis XIV. and father of the regent), so that he might lawfully have contracted a secret marriage with Anne of Austria.

"Old Madame de Beauvais, the queen-mother's first *femme-de-chambre*, knew the secret of the absurd marriage, and used her knowledge to make the queen do whatever she wished. This circumstance was the cause of the extensive privileges of *femmes-de-chambre* in this country." (Letter of the Duchesse d'Orléans, September 13, 1713.)

"The queen-mother, wife of Louis XIII., did much worse than love Mazarin, she married him; for he was not a priest, and was not even in orders, which might have prevented it. He grew terribly weary of the good queen-mother, and lived on bad terms with her; it was no more than she deserved for entering into such a marriage." (Letter of the Duchesse d'Orléans, November 2, 1717.)

"Her (the queen's) conscience was clear concerning Cardinal Mazarin; he was not a priest, so they could marry. The secret corridor by which he went to her apartments every night may still be seen at the Palais-Royal." (Letter of the Duchesse d'Orléans, July 2, 1719.)

"The queen governs according to the passion which tyrannizes over her. In her interviews with the cardinal one can see in their eyes, in their glances, in all their actions that they are so passionately in love that they cannot part without great suffering. If it is true, as is whispered, that they have contracted a marriage of conscience, and that Père Vincent, of the mission, sanctified their union, they may do all that they do, and more that we do not see." (Remonstrance against the conclusion of peace, 1649.)

The masked man told the apothecary at the Bastille

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that he thought he was about sixty years old. (*Questions sur l'Encyclopédie.*) He must in that case have been born in 1644, at a time when the royal power was in the hands of Anne of Austria, but actually wielded by Mazarin.

Is there anything in history which lends probability to the idea of Anne of Austria's having secretly given birth to a son at that time?

"In 1644 Anne of Austria left the Louvre because her apartments there did not please her; she went to live at the Palais-Royal, which Richelieu at his death bequeathed to the late king. Immediately upon taking up her abode there she was very ill with the jaundice, which the doctors attributed to no other cause than grief and melancholy, and excessive application to affairs of state, which caused her much anxiety." (*Mémoires de Madame de Motteville*, Vol. I, page 194.)

"This pretended anxiety caused by the condition of affairs was doubtless invented to explain a pretended sickness. Anne of Austria's great grief and great cause for anxiety did not come upon her until 1649; she did not begin to complain of Mazarin's despotism until toward the close of 1645." (*Mémoires de Motteville*, Vol. I, pp. 272–3.) "She frequented the theatre during the year of mourning for Louis XIII., but was careful to keep out of sight in her box." (*Ibid.*, page 342.)

Abbé Soulavie, in the sixth volume of the *Mémoires de Richelieu*, published in 1793, argued against the opinion of M. de Saint-Mihiel, and supported with additional arguments the theory put forward by himself some time before.

The futility of researches in the archives of the Bastille, and the momentous character of political events diverted public attention from the subject for some years.

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In 1800 the *Magasin Encyclopédique* (Vol. VI, page 472) published an article entitled: *Mémoires sur les problèmes historiques, et la méthode de les résoudre, appliquée à celui qui concerne l'homme au masque de fer,** signed C. D. O. The author adopted the theory which identified the Mask with the Duke of Mantua's prime minister, whom he called Girolamo Magni.

In the same year, 1800, M. Roux-Fazillac produced an octavo volume of 142 pages, entitled: *Recherches historiques et critiques sur l'homme au masque de fer, d'où résultent des notions certaines sur ce prisonnier.*† These investigations were based upon secret correspondence relative to the negotiations, intrigues and abduction of a secretary of the Duke of Mantua, named Matthioli, and not Girolamo Magni.

In 1802 an anonymous writer (possibly Baron de Servière) published a *Véritable clef de l'histoire de l'homme au masque de fer,*‡ in eleven pages, in the shape of a letter signed Reth, addressed to General Jourdan, and dated at Turin, wherein are certain details concerning Matthioli and his family. The pseudo Reth demonstrates that the Duke of Mantua's secretary was abducted, masked and imprisoned by order of Louis XIV. in 1679, but he does not prove that this secretary and the Iron Mask were one and the same person under different names.

In 1809 M. Crawfurd, who had previously said in 1798: "I can not doubt that the Man in the Iron Mask was the son of Anne of Austria, but I am unable to

* Notes upon historical problems and the method of solving them, with special application to that which concerns the Man in the Iron Mask.

† Historical and critical investigations concerning the Man in the Iron Mask, from which are deduced indisputable facts concerning that prisoner.

‡ Reliable Key to the History of the Man in the Iron Mask.

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decide whether he was the twin brother of Louis XIV., or was born while the queen did not live with the king, or during her widowhood" (*Histoire de la Bastille*) demolished Roux-Fazillac's theory in *Mêlanges d'histoire et de littérature tirés d'un portefeuille*,* published in 1809 in quarto form, and in 1817 in octavo.

In 1825 M. Delort discovered several letters relating to Matthioli among the archives, and published the *Histoire de l'homme au masque de fer*. This work, which was translated into English by George Agar Ellis, was re-translated from English into French in 1830 under the title of *Histoire authentique du prisonnier d'état connu sous le nom du masque de fer*. Herein occurs the anecdote relative to Oliver Cromwell's second son.

In 1826 appeared the version of M. de Taulès, who identified the masked man as the Armenian patriarch.

Six years later the great success of the drama produced at the Odéon won the majority of people over to the version put forward by Soulavie. The bibliophile Jacob is in error when he says that I followed a tradition preserved in the Choiseul family; it was M. le Duc de Bassano who handed me a copy prepared under his eyes at the time when Napoleon commanded investigations to be made concerning the prisoner. The Duc de Bassano informed me that the original of this narrative (which agrees with that contained in the Richelieu memoirs) was in existence in the archives of the Department of Foreign Affairs. In 1834 the journal of the Historical Institute published a letter from M. Auguste Billiard, who stated that he had copied the same narrative by command of the late M. le Comte de Montalivet, Minister of the Interior under the Empire.

M. Dufey, of the Yonne, published in the same year

* Historical and literary miscellanies, selected from a portfolio.

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a *Histoire de la Bastille*, and inclined to the belief that the prisoner was a son of Buckingham.

Among the personages of real or imaginary historical importance who might have been covered with the famous mask, there was one of whom no one had as yet thought, although his name was mentioned by the minister Chamillart; that was the celebrated superintendent Fouquet. In 1837 the bibliophile Jacob, fortified with texts and quotations, applied himself anew to this sort of Chinese puzzle, which had furnished exercise for the imaginative faculties of so many pundits, and of which no one had thus far succeeded in arranging all the pieces. Has he been more fortunate than his predecessors?

At first glance his claim is astonishing. It seems strange to bring Fouquet to life again, who was sentenced to lifelong imprisonment in 1664, and committed to the custody of Saint-Mars at Pignerol, and whose death was announced, falsely, if this be true, in 1680. The first thing that one seeks to find in investigating the Iron Mask is a sufficient reason of state for requiring a prisoner's features to be concealed so persistently until his death; and secondly an explanation of the respect shown him by Louvois, a most extraordinary exchange of positions at any time, and more especially under the reign of Louis XIV., when a courtier would have been very careful not to do homage to an unfortunate wretch whom his master had disgraced. Whatever may have been the cause of Louis' wrath against Fouquet, whether it was jealousy of the power which the superintendent arrogated to himself, his rival claims to the affections of certain of the king's mistresses, or even a well-founded suspicion of still more audacious schemes, would not the king's desire for vengeance have been gratified by the

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utter ruin of his enemy, by a public sentence to imprisonment for life? What more could he have wished? Why should his wrath, which had been appeased in 1664, break out again, hotter than before, sixteen years later, and imagine a new and more severe punishment for him? According to the bibliophile's theory, the king was harassed by the continual appeals for pardon addressed to him by the superintendent's family, and conceived the idea of announcing his death in order to be rid of such appeals. The hatred of Colbert, he says, was at the bottom of it all; but even if that hatred did hasten the original catastrophe which overwhelmed Fouquet, are we to suppose that it still pursued him beyond the sentence, outlasted a long period of imprisonment, and finally, renewing its strength, infected the minds of the king and his advisers? And even then how are we to explain Louvois' respect? Colbert certainly would not have saluted Fouquet, the prisoner; was his colleague likely to do it?

It must be admitted, however, that of all the numberless theories, this one (thanks to the vast learning of the bibliophile) has in its favor more quotations and interpretations, and a greater wealth of dates and scholarly investigation than any other.

It is certain:

1. That the precautions observed in the matter of guarding Fouquet at Pignerol resemble in every respect those which were observed later in the case of the Iron Mask at the Bastille, as well as at Ile Sainte-Marguerite.

2. That the majority of the traditions relative to the Iron Mask may apply to Fouquet.

3. That the first appearance of the Iron Mask followed almost immediately Fouquet's alleged death in 1680.

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4. That Fouquet's death in 1680 is not beyond question.

The decree of the Chamber of Justice, of December 20, 1664, banished Fouquet from the kingdom forever. But "the king was of opinion that there might be grave danger in allowing the said Fouquet to leave the kingdom, in view of his intimate acquaintance with the most important affairs of state." Consequently the sentence of perpetual banishment was *commuted* to perpetual imprisonment. (Report of M. Fouquet's defence.) The official instructions, dated December 24, signed by the king and handed to Saint-Mars, direct that Fouquet "be not allowed to communicate with any person whatsoever, either verbally or in writing; and that he do not leave his apartments for any reason, or on any pretext, not even to take the air." Louvois' suspicions, as evidenced in his letters to Saint-Mars, extended to everything. The precautions which he enjoined could not have been greater for the Man in the Iron Mask.

The anecdote of the shirt covered with writing and found by a barber, as reported by Abbé Papon, may have some connection with these passages from two letters of Louvois to Saint-Mars:

"Your letter has been handed me with the new handkerchief upon which was some writing of M. Fouquet." (December 18, 1665.)

"You may say to him that if he continues to use his table linen for writing-paper, he must not be surprised if you give him no more." (November 21, 1667.)

Père Papon relates that a valet of the masked prisoner died in his master's room; Fouquet's valet, condemned with his master to life imprisonment, died in February, 1680. (Letter of Louvois to Saint-Mars, March 12.)

Events that took place at Pignerol may have found

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an echo at Ile Sainte-Marguerite when Saint-Mars transferred his "former prisoner" thither. The handsome clothes, fine linen, books, everything that was lavished upon the masked prisoner, were not denied Fouquet. The furnishing of his second apartment at Pignerol cost more than 1200 livres. (Letter of Louvois, February 20, 1665.) The clothes and linen which Saint-Mars furnished him in thirteen months cost, for the former 1042 livres, and for the other 1646 livres. (Letters of Louvois, twelfth December, 1665, and twenty-second February, 1666.)

We know also that prior to 1680 Saint-Mars had but two prisoners of prominence in his custody at Pignerol—Fouquet and Lauzun. And yet the "prisoner that he formerly had at Pignerol," according to Dujonca's journal, must have been at that fortress before the end of August, 1681, at which time Saint-Mars went to the fortress of Exilles. It was therefore between March 23, 1680, the date of Fouquet's supposed death, and September 1, 1681, that the Iron Mask appeared at Pignerol, whence Saint-Mars took but *two* prisoners to Exilles. One of the two was probably the Mask; the other, who was certainly Matthioli, died before 1687, in which year Saint-Mars, having obtained the government of Ile Sainte-Marguerite in January, took with him but *one* prisoner to that fortress.

"I will issue such strict orders for guarding my prisoner, that I can answer to you for his safe keeping." (Saint-Mars to Louvois, January 20, 1687.)

Louvois' correspondence with Saint-Mars mentions Fouquet's death under date of March 23, 1680; but in subsequent letters Louvois does not write "the late M. Fouquet," but simply "M. Fouquet" as before. The majority of the historians of Paris have stated that

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Fouquet was interred in the same vault with his father in the chapel of Saint-François de Sales at the church connected with the convent of the Filles de la Visitation Sainte-Marie; but there is proof that this is not so. The vault of the chapel of Saint-François de Sales was not opened until 1786, when the last of the Sillerys, Adelaïde-Félicité Brulart was laid therein. The convent was suppressed in 1790, and the church given over to the Protestants in 1802, but the sanctity of the tombs was respected. In 1836 the cathedral of Bourges demanded the remains of one of its archbishops, who was interred at the Filles de Sainte-Marie, which was founded by Madame de Chantal at the beginning of the seventeenth century. All the coffins were examined, and all the inscriptions carefully scrutinized; Nicolas Fouquet's was missing!

"It is a very remarkable thing," says Voltaire, "that no one knows where the famous superintendent died." (*Dictionnaire Philosophique*, article *Ana.*)

But alas! this theory, so laboriously built up, falls to pieces before a date, which has already overturned the suggestion of the Duke of Monmouth and the Comte de Vermandois. "THE PRISONER WHO HAS BEEN IN YOUR CUSTODY FOR TWENTY YEARS." (Letter of Barbézieux, August 13, 1691.) In the light of that passage, which the bibliophile made use of to demolish his predecessors, the prisoner, who had been in Saint-Mars' custody TWENTY YEARS, could not have been Fouquet, for in 1791 *twenty-seven* years had elapsed since the beginning of his captivity, but only *eleven* since his alleged death.

We have impartially set forth all the opinions which have been formed concerning this extraordinary enigma. We believe that the Man in the Iron Mask was born near the throne. Although the mystery still awaits

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definitive solution, it is certain at least from all that we have placed before our readers that wherever he went this masked prisoner was ordered, upon peril of his life, to conceal his face. It follows that his features might have revealed his identity during a period of half a century from one end of France to the other! There must therefore have been a face, noteworthy and familiar in every province in France, even in a prison on an island, bearing a resemblance to the face of the prisoner!

Whose, pray, was that face, to which the resemblance was so striking, if not that of Louis XIV. the masked prisoner's twin brother?

To overthrow this simple and natural interpretation convincing evidence must be forthcoming.

We have confined ourselves to the role of a magistrate examining the evidence, and we are certain that the reader will bear us no ill-will for placing him in a position to make his own selection between so many contradictory theories. It seemed to us that no romance we might invent would afford greater interest than an account of the investigations we have made. Everything relating to the masked prisoner excites the keenest interest. Moreover, what is our purpose in these pages? To unmask a great crime, and brand the memory of the executioner. The facts we have noted speak for themselves, and are more eloquent than any product of the imagination.

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NOTES.

Note 1 (see page 153).—This book set forth no facts that were not already known. It had such great success, however, in Holland and in France, because of an anecdote which was then for the first time given to the public, that it was reissued the same year in a 16mo, Elzevir volume, and the following year in 18mo, with additions. Who was the author of these *mémoires?* It may be of interest to know, as he was the first to throw down this challenge to the curiosity of Europe. We can do no better than borrow the luminous, and in our view conclusive discussion of the question by the bibliophile Jacob, who seems to us to have solved it by his clever and logical and at the same time very plausible argument.

"Was the author, as commonly supposed, the Chevalier de Rességuier, who was consigned to the Bastille about that time? (*Fevret de Fontette, Bibliothèque historique de la France*, volume IV, page 424.) But the cause of his imprisonment is set forth upon the register of the Bastille, and it is known that he had written verses against Madame de Pompadour.

"Might it not have been, as Madame de Hausset alleged in an unpublished letter, Madame de Vieux-Maisons, one of the most vicious women of her time, who took Crébillon *fils* for her responsible publisher? But Crébillon *fils*, who laid the scenes of his salacious novels in Persia, and who published in 1746, *Les Amours de Zéokinisul, Roi des Kofiraus*" (Louis XV., King of the French), never ventured into politics, but confined himself to erotic tales, which were much relished at court.

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"Might it not have been one Pecquet, a clerk in the department of Foreign Affairs, who was said to have been confined in the Bastille on account of this book? But the book unquestionably found its way into France through the medium of the secretaries of embassy, and a single copy discovered in Pecquet's hands would have been a sufficient ground for a *lettre de cachet* against him.

"Lastly, could it have been the Duc de Nivernais, who sought rest from the fatigues of campaigning in the composition of fables in the company of Voltaire and Montesquieu? But the Duc de Nivernais took great pains to collect all that he had ever written in an edition of his works (Paris, 1796, 8 vols., octavo) which was published at a time when the persecution to which the *Mémoires de Perse* were originally subjected was no longer an incentive to anonymity. Furthermore this historical allegory in no respect resembles the literary style of the Duc de Nivernais, who was a poet and prose writer of refinement and wit, but timid and weak and devoid of inventive genius.

"Proofs therefore are lacking in this matter of problematical paternity, and M. Barbier, who puts forward several conjectures on this subject in his *Dictionnaire des Anonymes* (second edition, Vol. II, page 400) does not satisfactorily account for his leaning in favor of Pecquet, by citing a manuscript note at the head of a copy in his possession. We know the value of the voucher of a maker of marginal notes, when his name is not Huet, or La Monnoye, or Merlier de Saint-Léger.

"For my own part I have nothing more authentic to put forward as to the authorship of these *mémoires*; but I shall offer my opinion as a simple presumption for what it is worth. I think that the *Mémoires de la cour de Perse* must have been written by Voltaire.

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"We find in them the characteristic style of his tales, less carefully elaborated, and here and there his biting wit. 'Too many works see the light,' says the advertisement, 'for which apologies are offered, and with the more reason because there are almost none of them which deserve that the apologies should be accepted.' The author fancies that one of his friends, an Englishman, while visiting Paris is allowed to examine 'a quantity of secret manuscript memoirs, preserved in the library of Ali-Couli-Kan, first Secretary of State, and a nobleman of distinguished merit,' and undertakes to translate a part of those dealing with the reign of Cha-Saphie (Louis XV.). These are the unpublished *Mémoires* which M. de W. refers to in his letter invoking the testimony of Voltaire (Letter from M. de W. to M. de G. [imaginary initials] inserted in the *Journal des Savans* for the month of July, Amsterdam edition, page 348), who had up to that time written nothing on the subject; moreover it is easy to recognize the Duc de Richelieu in the eulogistic description of Ali-Couli-Kan, especially when we remember that Voltaire was then collecting materials for his *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, and was drawing upon the souvenirs of the marshal, his friend and patron.

"In the advertisement the author announces that he has translated these *Mémoires* from the English. 'I beg the reader to reflect that the genius of the English tongue is very far removed from that of the French. The latter is clearer and more concise, but less abundant and less forcible.' Did not Voltaire draw this same comparison between the two languages over and over again in the same words?

"Furthermore, Voltaire had business relations with the Amsterdam company, after his journey to Holland

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in 1740, to observe the impression produced by the King of Prussia's *Ante-Machiavèl*. It was at that time that he found reason to complain of a Dutch bookseller, named Vanduren, 'the most consummate rascal of his kind,' say the *mémoires* of Voltaire. He took advantage of that journey to publish Madame du Châtelet's *Institutions de Physique*, with a preface by his own hand, and that book bore the imprint of the same associated booksellers who brought out the *Mémoires de Perse* five years later. The satirical sketch of Voltaire which the publisher added to the second edition, may have been a stroke of revenge on the part of Vanduren, who might well have taken a grim delight in making sport of the author under the name of Coja-Schid, in his own work.

"'His arrogance was unendurable; great men, princes included, had spoiled him so completely that he was impertinent to them, impudent to his equals, and insolent to his inferiors. His mind was low, his heart bad, and his character rascally. He was an envious, biting critic, far from just, and a superficial writer of poor taste. Although born to a modest competence, he was so covetous and greedy that he sacrificed everything, law, duty, honor and good faith to the most trifling selfish interests.'

"How can we explain Voltaire's silence in the face of such murderous criticism. Voltaire, who always returned his enemies blow for blow, who never forgave the slightest attack upon his works, and who, in the very same year that this faithful portrait appeared, applied to Moncrif, the queen's reader, for leave to prosecute the poet Roi, who had 'filled the measure of his crimes to overflowing,' by publishing a defamatory libel, in which the Académie was insulted, and Voltaire 'horribly maltreated?' (See *Correspondance Generale de Voltaire*, letter to Moncrif, March, 1746.)

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"Finally, it is beyond question that at the time of the publication of the *Mémoires de Perse*, Voltaire was at work upon kindred subjects: he was preparing his *Siècle de Louis XIV.* for the press, and was also treating in the shape of tales, divers Oriental subjects which the *Lettres Persanes* had made fashionable. *Babone, Mêmnon, Zadig* belong to the same period as the *Mémoires de Perse*, and Voltaire probably envied Montesquieu the vogue of the *Lettres Persanes*.

"'But,' I shall be asked, 'why did not Voltaire at a late day avow the authorship of a work which is in some respects worthy of his paternity?' If Voltaire had done so, all doubt would have been removed, and I should have no need to seek to draw aside the veil of anonymity behind which I think that I can descry the author of the *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, breaking out a path, so to speak, for a new fact, which he proposed to extort by main force from the archives of the Bastille.

"Shall I proffer a pure supposition, which does not, however, lack elements of probability? I fancy that the Maréchal de Richelieu, being possessed of the secret of the masked man's identity, allowed himself to be taken by surprise by Voltaire's entreaties and clever manœuvring, and admitted him under the sanction of an oath to a knowledge of that obscure mystery, which was shared by none but a few confidential friends of Louis XIV.; such, at least, is the natural inference from that passage in the *Mémoires de Perse*, where it is said that the 'secret was ill-kept,' and that 'great men are commonly obliged to entrust their secrets to several persons, among whom there are always some who cannot be depended upon.'

"Voltaire, who was one of the latter class, no sooner became acquainted with the enigma, 'if not with the

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correct solution of it, which was committed to the keeping of three or four persons only, than he was consumed by an overwhelming desire to reveal what he knew, and perhaps to guess at something more; but such a course would call down upon him the revengeful wrath of the king, and the hatred or contempt of the Duc de Richelieu. Furthermore, the Bastille, which had concealed so many years within its bowels of stone the name and existence of one prisoner of state, might enfold once more and forever the imprudent writer to punish him for adding a new stanza to the *j'ai vu*.

"Now in Voltaire's eyes any method was good that would give the victory to truth and right; he did not shrink from falsehood even, or from assuming any disguise whatsoever, with the certainty that his style and his wit would betray him. Thus he dubbed himself Aaron Mathataï, Jacques Aimon, Akakia, etc., one after another, and invented a hundred other pseudonyms more or less transparent; and, at other times, published some of his more important as well as some of his most insignificant works anonymously, making constant use of the underground presses of Holland.

"It is easy to understand why he did not lay claim to the honor of a book which might have embroiled him with his patrons, the Maréchal de Richelieu and Madame de Pompadour, in the most brilliant period of his career as a courtier, when the favors heaped upon him by Louis XV. kept him at Versailles, when he was the guest of the queen of Étioles, when he was prostrating himself before the sun of Fontenoy, and was proudly exhibiting his titles of gentleman-in-ordinary to the king, and historiographer of France.

"It is my conclusion, therefore, that Voltaire determined to put the story of the Iron Mask in circulation

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in a roundabout way, so that he might be at liberty to expound his views upon a subject which he would not have dared to approach openly, had not somebody else taken the initiative. This 'somebody' was no other than himself. By these tactics he was enabled to discuss publicly a very interesting historical point, which he could not touch upon in his own person except in private converse with the Duc de Richelieu, under the seal of inviolable secrecy. Voltaire strongly resembled King Midas' barber, who is represented in the legend as digging a hole in the ground to relieve himself of a secret entrusted to him by repeating it into the hole. King Midas has the ears of an ass! Voltaire was anxious to publish all that he knew, and oftentimes what he did not know—very different from Fontenelle, who refused to open his hand, although it was filled with truths. After this publication the masked prisoner passed into a tradition in society, and Voltaire was perhaps authorized by Richelieu himself to confirm this extraordinary fact, instead of contradicting it. That is why the author of the *Mémoires de Perse* never revealed his identity.

"It should be remarked also that Voltaire, without entering into details, always maintained that no one before himself had published the story of the Iron Mask."

Note 2 (see page 165).—First volume of the "History of the detention of the philosophers and men of letters at the Bastille and Vincennes, preceded by that of Fouquet, Pelisson and Lauzun, with all the authentic, unpublished documents."

Paris, 1829, 3 vols., 8vo, published by J. Delert.

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Note 3 (see page 170).—Observations concerning the customs and regulations of the Bastille; see also the first part of *La Bastille Devoilée.*

Note 4 (see page 173).—This cell was on the third floor. "Each cell has its number; they are numbered according to their elevation; thus the First Bazinière is on the first floor of the tower of that name above the dungeon; then come the Second Bazinière, the Third, the Fourth, and the Calotte Bazinière." (Historical Remarks and Anecdotes concerning the Bastille.)

Note 5 (see page 174).—"The ordinary furniture of each cell in the Bastille consisted of a bed with curtains of green serge, four mattresses (one of straw), two tables, two water-jugs, an iron fork, a tin spoon, and drinking-cup of the same metal, a copper candle-stick, iron snuffers, two or three chairs, and sometimes an old arm-chair."

(Historical Remarks and Anecdotes concerning the Bastille.)

Constantin de Renneville, author of the *Inquisition Française*, who was imprisoned in the Second Bertaudière, in 1702, gives this description of his prison:

"It was a little octagonal box, some twelve or thirteen feet across, and about the same height. There was a foot of filth on the floor, which prevented one from seeing that it was plastered. All the window embrasures were walled up, except two at which there were bars. These embrasures were some two feet wide toward the cell, but were shaped like a cone, growing narrower and narrower toward the outer surface of the wall, where they were not six inches across, and were guarded by very close iron gratings. As all the light there was came in through these gratings, and as it was lessened

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by the thickness of the walls—ten feet—as well as by the grating and by a window at the cell end, with a very thick and very dirty glass, it was barely possible to distinguish objects in the room; it was a weak imitation of daylight. The walls were coated with filth. The only clean spot was the ceiling, which was very smooth and white. My furniture consisted of a small folding-table, very old and broken, and a little straw-seated chair, so rickety that one could hardly sit on it. The place was filled with fleas; this was caused by the disgusting habits of the prisoner who last occupied it. About seven o'clock they brought me a small camp-bed, a mattress, a bed-puff stuffed with feathers, and a wretched green coverlid, filled with holes, and so overrun with revolting vermin that I had the greatest difficulty in getting rid of them."

(*Histoire de la Bastille*, Vol. I, page 105.)

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MARTIN GUERRE.

One often hears expressions of surprise at the striking resemblance which sometimes exists between two persons who are in no way connected with each other; it is far more surprising that such resemblances are so infrequent. Indeed, how can one fail to marvel at the stupendous creative power, which goes on producing such an infinite variety of combinations from the same elements? The more one reflects upon this prodigious fecundity of varying forms, the greater is one's stupefaction. In the first place, each nation has its distinct, characteristic type, which differentiates it from all other nations.

Thus there are the English type, the Spanish type, the German or Slavonic type, etc. Secondly, in each nation there are families, distinguished from one another by peculiarities less general, but still well marked. Finally, there are the individual members of each family, between whom the shades of difference are more or less noticeable. What a vast multitude of faces! What a multiplicity of impressions from the innumerable proofs of the human face! Millions of patterns, and no copies. In considering this ever varying spectacle, which, pray, should cause the greater wonder, the unending diversity of features, or the chance resemblance of a few individuals here and there? Is it so remarkable that between the two ends of the world there should exist now and then two persons, whose features are shaped upon the same model? Surely not; and so what we ought to marvel at

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is not that they do exist in some quarter of the globe, but that they happen to meet upon the same spot, and that our eyes, which are so unaccustomed to such resemblances, see them side by side. Many fables have been founded upon instances of this sort, from Amphitryon down to our own days; and some examples are noted in history, such as those of the pretended Dmitri in Russia, of Perkin Warbeck in England, and of divers other famous impostors; but the episode which we now lay before our readers is not the least remarkable or the least interesting.

On August 10, 1557, an ill-omened day in our history, the cannon were still roaring in the plains around Saint-Quentin at six o'clock in the evening; the French army had been cut in pieces by the combined forces of England and Spain, commanded by the illustrious captain, Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy. The infantry entirely wiped out, the Constable Montmorency made prisoner with several generals, the Duc d'Enghien fatally wounded, and the flower of the nobility mown down,—such were the disastrous results of a battle which plunged France in mourning, and would have overturned the throne of Henri II., had not the Duc de Guise taken a glorious revenge in the following year.

In a small village quarter of a league from the battle-field the air was filled with the heart-rending groans of the wounded and dying who had been transported thither; the inhabitants had given up their houses to be used as hospitals, and two or three barber-surgeons were hurrying from house to house, ordering somewhat hastily operations which they entrusted to their assistants, and driving away from time to time certain fugitives, who had succeeded in getting in among the wounded, on the pretence of looking to the comfort of friends or relatives who were very dear to them. They had already expelled a goodly

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number of the poor devils, when they opened the door of a little room, where upon a coarse mat, lay a soldier bathed in his own blood; another soldier was watching him with extreme solicitude.

"Who are you?" said one of the surgeons to the wounded man; "I don't recognize you as belonging to any part of the French army."

"In God's name, help me!" cried the sufferer; "help me and may God bless you!"

"From the color of his doublet," rejoined the other surgeon, "I would wager that the varlet belongs to some Spanish nobleman; by what mistake was he brought here?"

"For pity's sake!" muttered the poor wretch; "I am in such pain!"

"Bah!" exclaimed the last speaker, spurning him with his foot; "die like a dog, villain!"

This act, which was followed by a pitiful groan, disgusted the other practitioner.

"After all, he's a man; he's a sick man, begging us to help him! leave me with him, René."

René went out muttering, and the other set to work upon the wound. It was a fearful wound, made by a ball from an arquebus, which had passed through the leg and shattered the bone; amputation was unavoidable.

Before proceeding to perform the operation, the surgeon turned to the other soldier, who had withdrawn to the darkest corner of the little room.

"Who are you?" he said.

The individual thus questioned came forward into the light; no other reply was necessary. He resembled his companion so closely that at first glance they might well have been taken for brothers, even for twin brothers. Both were above middle height; they had the same

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olive-tinted complexion, high forehead, black eyes, aquiline nose, pointed chin, lower lip slightly protruding, and were both slightly round-shouldered; but this last peculiarity was by no means noticeable. Their general appearance denoted great physical strength, and they were not devoid of a certain manly beauty. Never was such a perfect resemblance seen; even their ages seemed to correspond, neither being apparently more than thirty-two. The only points of difference between them, over and above the pallor of the man lying on the ground, were, in the first place, his extreme spareness contrasted with the other's tendency to *embonpoint*, and, secondly, a large scar on the wounded man's right eyebrow.

"Look to your brother's soul," said the surgeon to the soldier who was on his feet; "for I pity him if it is in so great danger as his body."

"Is there no hope?" asked the sufferer's double.

"The wound is too broad and deep," replied the man of science, "to be cauterized with boiling oil according to the old-fashioned method; *delenda est causa mali*, the cause of the trouble must be extirpated, as Master Ambroise Paré says; but I am compelled *secare ferro*, that is to say, to cut off the leg. God grant that he may survive the operation!"

While he was preparing his instruments, he looked the victim's supposed brother in the face, and added:

"Pray, how does it happen that you and he carry a musket on different sides, for I see that you are of our army, while this poor devil wears Spanish colors?"

"Oh! that would be too long a story for you to listen to," rejoined the other, shaking his head; "I naturally followed the career that was open to me, and took service under the flag of our lord and sovereign, Henri,

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the second of the name; as for him whom you have rightly guessed to be my brother, as he was born in Biscay, he became attached to the household of the Cardinal of Burgos, and later to that of the cardinal's brother, who compelled him to go to the war with him; I fell in with him on the battlefield just as he fell; I pulled him out from under a heap of dead bodies, and brought him hither myself."

During this narrative, the speaker's features betrayed secret agitation; but the surgeon took no notice. Not finding among his instruments those which he needed for the operation, he cried: "My associate must have carried them away with him! he never uses any others, because he's jealous of my reputation; but I will overtake him. Such beautiful instruments they are! they do their work themselves, and are quite capable of imparting skill to a bungler like him! I will be here in an hour or two; let him have rest and sleep, no excitement, nothing to inflame the wound; and when the operation is properly performed, we will see—with God's help."

He went to the door, leaving the poor fellow to the tender mercies of his brother.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he added, with a shake of the head, "with the help of a miracle, he may win through."

The surgeon was no sooner outside the door, than the unwounded soldier stooped and examined the other's face with interest.

"Yes," he muttered between his teeth; "I had heard that there was a man in the other army who resembled me exactly, feature for feature; upon my word, we might be mistaken for each other. It's as if I were looking at my own face in a mirror. I did my best to find him in the Spanish ranks, and thanks to my

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companion, who so opportunely brought him down with his arquebus, I succeeded in avoiding the risks of the battle by busying myself with taking away his body.

"But that is not enough," he reflected, still gazing at the sufferer's pain distorted features; "it isn't enough for me to have got safely out of the fight! I have nothing in the world; having no home, no means, being by birth a beggar and adventurer, I enlisted, and I have gone through my pay; I hoped for an opportunity to do a little pillaging, and here we are in full retreat! What is there for me to do? Throw myself head first into the water? Surely not; I might as well be shot. But can't I take advantage of this extraordinary chance resemblance, and make use of this man whom heaven has thrown in my way, and who has but a few moments more to live?"

While he was indulging in these reflections he leaned over the wounded man, with a sardonic laugh; one would have said that it was Satan watching for the passing of the soul of one damned, who cannot escape him.

"Alas! alas!" cried the sufferer; "may God have mercy on me! my end is near, I am sure of it."

"Nonsense! put away such gloomy thoughts, comrade. One of your legs pains you, and we will have it off; think of the other, and trust in Providence."

"I'm thirsty—a drop of water, for God's sake!"

He was in a raging fever. The self-constituted nurse looked about, and spied a jug filled with water, toward which the dying man extended a trembling hand. An infernal thought came to his mind. He poured some of the water into a gourd which hung at his belt, and put it to the sufferer's lips, then drew it away.

"Oh! I am dying with thirst—water, for pity's sake—oh! give, give ——"

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"On one condition: that you will tell me your whole history."

"Yes, but give me ——"

The other let him drink a mouthful; then pressed him with questions touching his family, friends and worldly position, and forced him to reply by dangling before his eyes the draught which would cool the fire that was devouring his entrails.

At the conclusion of this examination, frequently interrupted, the sick man fell back exhausted, and almost unconscious.

His companion, being still far from satisfied, conceived the plan of reviving him by giving him several swallows of brandy; this powerful stimulant renewed the fever, and excited the brain to the necessary degree to enable him to procure answers to a new series of questions. Increased doses of the spirit were administered several times, at the risk of shortening the poor fellow's life. In a condition bordering upon delirium, his head seemed to be burning up; his suffering yielded to the violent fever, which carried him back to other times and places, to his youthful days, and the province where he was born. But still his tongue was tied by a sort of instinctive reserve; his inmost sentiments and the private details of his past life had not yet issued from his lips, and a paroxysm might carry him off at any moment. Time pressed; day was already beginning to break, when it occurred to the pitiless inquisitor to take advantage of the still remaining darkness. With a few solemn words he aroused the religious fears of the sufferer, striking terror to his inflamed imagination by dwelling upon the torments of the life to come and the pains of hell; and, his words being seconded by the intense excitement he had already produced in him, he appeared to the dying

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man's eyes as a Christian judge, who was about to commit him to everlasting damnation, or to open the gates of heaven for him to enter. At last, being pressed with questions, tormented with fear, and crushed by the overshadowing influence of this man, whose voice thundered in his ears like that of a minister of God, the dying man opened his lips, and made his confession.

A few moments later the executioner, for so he might well be called, leaned over his victim, opened his doublet, and took out some documents, and a few pieces of money; he then made a motion to draw his dagger, but held his hand, and disdainfully pushed the body away with his foot, as the first surgeon had done.

"I might kill you," he said, "but it would be a useless crime; I should simply put forward your last breath a few hours and hasten my right of succession."

He added mockingly:

"Adieu, brother!"

He left the room, as the moribund groaned feebly.

Some four months after this scene, a woman sat before the door of a house at one end of the village of Artigues, near Rieux, playing with a child of some nine or ten years. She was still young, and had the dark skin common among the women of the South; her luxuriant black hair fell in thick curls around her neck; the hidden fire of passion was betrayed now and then by the ardent glance of her eyes; but an habitual expression of indifference, and a sort of weariness seemed to be spread over the almost extinct flame, and the extreme thinness of her person denoted some hidden sorrow; one who looked upon her would surmise that her existence was incomplete, her happiness nipped in the bud, that her heart was broken, in short.

She wore a long dress with flowing sleeves, such as

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were fashionable among well-to-do women of the middle class in the sixteenth century. The house in front of which she was sitting belonged to her, as did the extensive field that lay beyond the garden. At the moment when we introduce her to our readers her attention was divided between her son's play and the orders she was giving an elderly maid-servant; suddenly a cry from the child made her start.

"Look, mother," he exclaimed, "look, there he is!"

Her eyes followed the direction of his finger, and spied a young boy passing the corner of the street.

"That's the boy," continued the child, "who called me all sorts of bad names yesterday, when I was playing with the other boys."

"What names did he call you, my son?"

"There was one I didn't understand, but it must have been an awful one, for all the other boys pointed their fingers at me, and went away and left me. He called me—he said he was only saying what his mother said—he called me a wicked bastard."

The young woman's face flushed purple with indignation.

"What!" she cried, "they dared! What an insult!"

"What does that ugly word mean, mamma?" queried the child, alarmed by her wrath. "Is that what they call poor boys who have no father?"

The mother caught the child in her arms.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "it's an infamous slander! Those people never saw the dear one for whom I mourn; they only came to the village six years ago, and its eight years since your father went away. But the lie is absurd at best, for our marriage was celebrated in yonder church; this house, which was my marriage-portion, was thrown open for us after the ceremony, and my poor

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Martin left friends and relatives here, who will not suffer the honor of his wife ——"

"Of his widow," interposed a grave voice.

"Ah! uncle!" cried the young woman turning toward an elderly man, who was coming out of the house.

"Yes, Bertrande," continued the new-comer, "you must get used to the idea. My nephew is no longer of this world, I am sure; otherwise he would not have been mad enough to leave us so long without news of him. After leaving his home so suddenly, as the result of a family quarrel, of which you would never tell me the cause, he wouldn't have borne malice for eight years; it wasn't his nature. Where did he go? What did he do? We know nothing about it, neither you, nor I, nor anyone, but you may be sure that he is dead, and lies in holy ground far from here. God rest his soul!"

Bertrande crossed herself and wept, covering her face with her hands.

"Good morning, Sanxi," said the uncle, patting the boy on the cheek; but he turned angrily away.

In truth, the man's appearance was not prepossessing; children instinctively fathom such people, false and cunning, whose hang-dog glances give the lie to their honeyed words.

"Bertrande," he cried, "your son is as intractable as his father used to be, and won't let me touch him."

"Forgive the child," rejoined the mother, "he is young, and doesn't yet know what he owes to his father's uncle; I will teach him better; he shall soon learn and be grateful for the trouble you have taken to preserve his little fortune."

"Yes, yes," said the uncle, forcing himself to smile, "I shall give a good account of it; I shall have to deal with you alone hereafter. Of course your husband is

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dead, my dear. Come; if you take my advice, you'll waste no more regret on such a worthless subject; let's think no more of him."

With that he took his leave, and left the young woman a prey to the gloomiest reflections.

Bertrande de Rolls was endowed by nature with ardent impulses, which had been kept within proper limits by a judicious bringing up. She had barely completed her twelfth year when she married young Martin Guerre, who was little, if any, older than herself. Premature unions of this description were then of frequent occurrence, especially in the provinces of the South. In most cases they were induced by family considerations, seconded by the precocious development of the youth of both sexes in certain climates. However, the young husband and wife lived for a long time as brother and sister. Bertrande's heart, which was in her childhood guided in the direction of legitimate love, became deeply attached to the being who was given her for her companion through life; she bestowed all her affection and all her thoughts upon him; he alone became the central object of her existence, and when their union was consummated, the birth of a son knit still more closely a bond already made strong by its long growth. But, as many philosophers have said, uniform, uncheckered happiness, which increases the attachment of the woman from day to day, often results in alienating the affections of the husband; and Martin Guerre demonstrated the truth of the saying. Active, restless, impatient under a yoke, which had been imposed upon him so early in life, curious to see the world, and to feel that he was free, he took advantage one day of a frivolous pretext, a trifling dispute, in which Bertrande afterwards confessed that she was first to blame, and left his house and

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the village. In vain did they seek him and await his return. Bertrande passed the first month in fruitless expectation; then she devoted her days to prayer, but heaven was deaf to her petition. She would fain have left the village also, and set out in search of the fugitive; but the world is wide, and there was no clew to guide her. What torture for such a loving heart, what bitter regret for the poor soul, thirsting for love; how many sleepless nights, without rest for body or mind!

Years rolled on, her son grew apace, but she obtained no knowledge of the fate of he whom she had loved so dearly. She often spoke of him to the child, who did not understand her; she tried to trace her husband's features in the young Sanxi's, and although she tried faithfully to concentrate all her affection upon her son, she found that there are sorrows which maternal love cannot efface, tears which it cannot dry; and the poor creature, consumed by the very ardor of the sentiments which she kept hidden in her heart, was slowly wasting away between regret for the past, vain longing in the present, and the prospect of future solitude.

Under such circumstances her honor was assailed, her mother-love wounded, and her husband's uncle, who should have been her defender and her staff, had naught but cold and discouraging words for her.

Old Pierre Guerre was selfish before everything; in his younger days he had been accused of practicing usury, and, indeed, there was considerable question as to the method by which he had acquired wealth; for the small clothier's business, which was his ostensible occupation, seemed unlikely to yield large profits. At the time of his nephew's disappearance it was natural that he should have been selected as a fit person to take charge of the family resources, and he immediately set about

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doubling the income, without however feeling called upon to render an account of his transactions to Bertrande. And so, when he made up his mind that Martin would never return, we may imagine that he had no desire to put an end to a condition of affairs, which was so advantageous to him.

Darkness settled down gradually upon the earth; it was the moment when the twilight blurs the outlines of distant objects, and renders their shapes indistinct. It was toward the close of autumn, the melancholy season, which calls to life so many gloomy fancies and the memory of so many vanished hopes.

The child had gone into the house, Bertrande, still sitting before the door, with her head upon her hand, was thinking sadly of her uncle's last words, and going over in her imagination the days long-past, which they recalled: the days of their childhood, when they, married so young, were still nothing more than playmates, indulging in innocent sports, as a prelude to the serious duties of life. And then their love, gradually increasing with their years, until the monotony of happiness was transformed, in her case to passion, in his to indifference. She fancied that she could still see him as he was on the eve of his departure, young and handsome, with his head held proudly erect, returning from a wearisome hunting expedition, and taking his seat at his son's cradle; she also recalled with bitterness of heart the jealous suspicions she had conceived, the tempest of anger in which she expressed them, the insult she put upon him, and the disappearance of the offended husband, followed by eight years of absence and mourning. She wept for her loneliness, for the desert in which she was living her life, surrounded by none but cold hearts or grasping hands, and, living only for her child, for him in whom she could at

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least see an imperfect image of the husband she had lost.

"Lost! yes, lost for ever," she said to herself with a sigh, looking out over the fields, which had seen him so many times at the same hour, in the last beams of the setting sun, return home for the evening meal. Bertrande gazed absently toward the distant hills, whose dark outlines were sharply traced against the glowing western sky; then she brought her eyes back to a little grove of olive-trees on the further side of a brook which flowed near her abode. Everything was calm and still. The approach of night brought silence with the darkness. It was the same spectacle which was spread out before Bertrande's eyes every evening, and although it was hard for her to tear herself away from it, she was in the act of rising to enter the house when her attention was attracted by a movement among the trees. She thought at first that she was mistaken; but the branches crackled as they were thrust aside, and a human form appeared on the other side of the brook.

Bertrande was afraid; she tried to cry out, but the very excess of her fear paralyzed her voice, as often happens in a frightful dream. Indeed it seemed to her as if it were a dream, for in spite of the darkness which rendered the new-comer's countenance indistinct, she thought that she could recognize features very dear to her memory. Was she the plaything of an hallucination? Had her ardent musings excited her to that point? She feared she was going mad, and knelt to pray. But the illusion did not vanish, and the motionless shade still stood before her, with folded arms, gazing steadfastly into her face. Thereupon she thought of sorcery, of witchcraft, and with the superstition prevalent at the time, she fervently kissed a crucifix which she wore upon

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her breast, and fell, almost fainting. With a single bound, the phantom crossed the brook, and stood at her side.

"Bertrande!" he said in a voice trembling with emotion.

She raised her head, uttered a piercing shriek, and found herself in her husband's arms.

The whole village was aware of what had happened, the same evening. The inhabitants crowded around Bertrande's door. Martin's friends and relatives were all eager to see him after his miraculous return, and those who had never known him were not the most backward in manifesting their curiosity; so that, before he and his wife were left to themselves, the hero of the occasion was obliged to exhibit himself publicly in a barn upon the estate. His four sisters pushed through the crowd and hung sobbing upon his neck; his uncle scrutinized his nephew wonderingly at first, then opened his arms to him. Everybody recognized him, beginning with Marguerite, the old servant, who entered the service of the young couple on the very day they were married; the only observable change that was noticed was that his features had taken on more character with his years, and that his figure was more fully developed. It was also noticed that he had a scar over his right eye, and that he limped slightly. The scar and the limp he said were the results of two wounds he had received, but which no longer caused him inconvenience.

Martin Guerre seemed most impatient to be left alone with his wife and son; but the assemblage demanded a narrative of his experiences during his voluntary exile, and he was obliged to gratify them. A longing to see the world came upon him, he said, in the midst of his happiness, about eight years before. He was unable to

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resist the nomadic impulse, and so one evening he started off without warning. A very natural instinct led him in the first place to his native province, Biscaye, where he embraced those of his relatives who were still living there. There he fell in with the Cardinal de Burgos, who took him into his service, with a promise of blows in abundance to be given and taken, good pay, and adventures galore. Some time after, he entered the service of the cardinal's brother, who forced him, much against his will, to go with him to the war, and to take up arms against the French. Thus it came about that he fought in the Spanish ranks at Saint-Quentin, where he received a terrible wound in the leg from a cannon-ball. He was taken to a village near by, where he fell into the hands of a surgeon who proposed to amputate the wounded limb; but, as good luck would have it, the surgeon was called away for a moment and did not return, and he found a kind-hearted old woman who dressed the wound and nursed him so skillfully, night and day, that he was cured in a few weeks, and returned at once to Artigues, where he was overjoyed to find his house and property intact, and above all his wife and child, whom he was firmly determined to leave no more.

When he came to the end of his story he grasped the hands of his neighbors, who were still marveling to see him in their midst. He called by their names several peasants, who were very young when he left the village, but who, when they heard their names, came forward men-grown, and hardly recognizable—delighted, however, that they were not forgotten. He returned his sisters' caresses with great warmth, and asked his uncle's forgiveness for all the trouble he had caused him by his mischievous propensities in his younger days, laughingly reminding him of his

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chastisements he received from him; he also remembered an Augustinian monk who taught him to read, as well as a reverend Capuchin whose profligate life had caused much scandal in the province. In short, he appeared, notwithstanding his long absence, to have preserved a most vivid recollection of places and persons and events. The good people overwhelmed him with congratulations; they vied with one another in blessing him for having virtuously determined to return, and in attesting Bertrande's grief, and her unsullied virtue. There was a great display of emotion, tears were shed, and several bottles from the cellar of Madame Martin Guerre were emptied. At last they separated, exclaiming at the unforeseen freaks of fate, and the neighbors withdrew, deeply moved and marveling, but well pleased, with the possible exception of old Pierre Guerre; certain words that his nephew let fall seemed to bode no good to his worldly interests, and he dreamed all night of his probable loss consequent upon Martin's return.

It was midnight when the husband and wife were left to themselves, and at liberty to indulge their mutual affection. Bertrande could hardly shake off her feeling of stupefaction; she could not believe her eyes or her ears; she beheld, standing beside her, in their marriage chamber, the husband she had lost eight years before, and had so bitterly mourned, and whom a few hours previously she had believed to be dead! In the sudden revulsion of feeling caused by such intense joy succeeding such intense sorrow, she could not summon up sufficient energy to make any outward manifestation of her sensations; her heart failed to suggest to her mind the words she required, for her confusion took away the power of reflection and of speech as well. When she began to grow calmer, however, and could read her

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feelings more distinctly, she wondered that she did not feel toward her husband that affectionate impulse, which carried her thoughts so far in quest of him the evening before. It was surely he, the features were his, it was the man whom she had chosen, to whom she had voluntarily given her heart, her hand and herself; and yet it seemed to her, upon seeing him once more, that she was separated from him by a barrier of coldness, of shame, of modesty even. His first kiss did not bring back her happiness; she blushed and was saddened by it. A strange result of a long absence! She could not define the changes that time had wrought in the aspect of the man; his features had become somewhat harsher; the contour of the face, the outer shell, the physical appearance had changed hardly at all; but his nature seemed to have changed; his eyes had not the old expression. Bertrande recognized her husband, and still she hesitated. In like manner did Penelope, after the return of Ulysses, wait until the testimony of her eyes should be confirmed by unmistakable proofs, and in order to prove his identity, the long-absent husband was compelled to recall secrets with which no one but she was acquainted.

As if he understood Bertrande's feelings, and divined that she was secretly suspicious of him, he lavished tender, loving expressions upon her, and called his dear Bertrande by all the endearing names which had been familiar on his lips in former days.

"My queen," he said, "my fair, white dove, does not your resentment fade away at sight of me? Is it still so keen that my humility is ineffectual to subdue it, and will not my repentance win me forgiveness in your eyes? Bertrande, Berthe, Bertranilla!"

She tried to smile, but her surprise forbade; the

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names were the same, but the inflection of the voice was different.

He took his wife's hands in his.

"Lovely hands!" he continued; "do they still wear my ring? Yes, there it is, and beside it the other ring, the sapphire that I gave you the day our Sanxi was born."

Bertrande did not reply, but gently lifted the child and placed him in his father's arms.

Martin showered caresses upon his son, and talked to him about the time when he was a helpless little fellow, and he used to carry him in his arms, lifting him up so that he could reach the fruit on the trees in the garden, and could pluck and eat it. He remembered that one day the wild briers lacerated the child's legs terribly, and with a great show of emotion looked to see if he still bore the mark.

Bertrande was touched by his deep affection for the boy, and by the memories he recalled; she blamed herself for her reserve, and drawing closer to the father of her child let her hand fall in his, as he said softly to her:

"My departure left you in a state of painful anxiety; I am very sorry. But what could you expect? I was young and proud, and your reproaches were so unjust!——"

"Ah!" said she, "do you still remember the cause of our dispute?"

"It was about young Rose, our neighbor, to whom you charged me with being too attentive, because you found me with her one evening by the fountain in the little wood. I explained that our meeting was due to chance alone; besides, Rose was nothing but a child; but you wouldn't listen to me, and in your anger ——"

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"Oh! forgive me, forgive me, my dear!" she interrupted, confused beyond measure.

"In your blind anger, you took whatever came first to your hand, and threw it into my face. From that came this wound," he added with a smile, pointing to the scar over his right eye; "this wound of which I still bear the scar."

"O heaven!" cried Bertrande, "can you ever forgive me?"

"You see that I can and do," Martin replied, embracing her.

Deeply moved, she put away the hair from her husband's forehead, and looked at the mark left by the blow.

"Why!" said she, in astonishment not unmixed with alarm, "the scar seems to be quite fresh——"

"Oh, yes!" rejoined Martin, with some embarrassment, "it re-opened only a short time ago. But I never think of it now; let's say no more about it, Bertrande; I don't wish to say anything to make you fear that you are any the less dear to me."

He drew her down upon his knees; she gently resisted.

"Send your son away," said Martin; "to-morrow he shall have evidence of my affection; but to-night, Bertrande, you are first in my thoughts."

The child kissed his father, and left the room.

Bertrande returned and knelt beside her husband, gazing into his face with an anxious smile.

Her close scrutiny seemed to annoy Martin.

"What is the matter?" he said; "why do you examine me so?"

"I don't know, my dear; forgive me, oh! do forgive me—the happiness of seeing you again was so unexpected!

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it seems like a dream, and I can't get accustomed to it so quickly; give me time to collect myself; let me pass the night in prayer! I ought to give thanks to God first of all for my happiness."

"No," rejoined her husband, putting his arm around her white neck, and smoothing her long hair; "no, your first thoughts are mine by right; after my long and wearisome journey the sight of you is all the repose I need; after so many trials your love is all that can make me happy. It is the hope which has sustained my strength, and I long to assure myself that it is not an illusive one."

He attempted to lift her from the floor.

"Oh! let me go, I implore you," she murmured.

"What!" he exclaimed, with some heat, "is this your love for me, Bertrande? Is this the way you have kept faith? May I not well doubt the truth of what your friends say? Ought I not to fear that indifference, or some other sentiment——"

"Ah! Monsieur, you insult me," said the young woman, rising.

He seized her in his arms.

"No, no, I would not think anything that could hurt you, my beautiful queen, and I believe in your faithfulness, as in the old days, you remember, when I took my first journey, and you wrote me those dear, loving letters which I have always preserved. See, here they are."

As he spoke he took some papers from his pocket, which Bertrande saw were in her handwriting.

"Yes," he went on, "I have read them and re-read them many times. Look, in this one you spoke of your love, and of your grief at my absence. Why this embarrassment, this sort of terror, now? Why, you are trembling all over, as you did on the day I received you

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from your father's hands. It was here, in this very room. Then, too, when you were left alone with me, you implored me to leave you, and to let you pass the night in prayer—but I insisted, you remember, and pressed you to my heart, as I do now."

"Oh!" she whispered, "in pity's name——"

But her words were stifled with a kiss. The memories of the past and the joy of the present asserted their sway, her chimerical fears vanished, and the curtains fell upon the nuptial bed.

The following day was a holiday for the whole village of Artigues. Martin called upon all those whom he had received the evening before; there was no end to the recognitions and embracing. The young people remembered how he had played with them when they were children; the old folks, that they were present at his betrothal when he was but twelve years old. The women recalled their past envy of Bertrande, and the prettiest of them all, Rose, daughter of Master Marcel, the apothecary, who had caused the poor woman so many jealous pangs, was well aware that her jealousy was not unfounded; Martin had made love to her, and she was none too well pleased to see him again; for now, married to a rich bourgeois, who was old and ugly and jealous, she sighed as she compared her own sad fate with that of her more fortunate neighbor.

Martin's sisters kept him long at their houses, and talked with him about their childish sports and their father and mother, both of whom died in Biscaye. He wiped away the tears which these memories of the past brought to his eyes, and they passed to more cheerful subjects. Dinner parties were given and returned; Martin collected his relatives and former friends about his table, and the most unaffected good humor reigned

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there. It was observed, however, that the central figure of these bacchanalian festivities abstained from wine, and he was taken to task for it. He replied that since he had been wounded, his health had been such that the slightest over-indulgence was dangerous. There was no gainsaying that excuse, and the result of Martin's precautions was that he kept his head and his presence of mind, while the others abandoned themselves to the foolish impulses of drunkenness.

"Indeed!" cried one of his guests who had dabbled in the study of medicine, "Martin is very wise to fear spirituous liquors; the most thoroughly healed wounds may re-open and become inflamed as the result of intemperance, while wine is a deadly poison to those who are suffering from wounds recently received; wounded men lying in the battlefield have been known to die in two hours because they had swallowed a few drops of brandy."

Martin Guerre changed color, and began a brisk conversation with the fair Rose, who sat next him. Bertrande noticed it, but manifested no uneasiness. She had been punished too severely for her first suspicions to give way to jealousy again; and then, too, her husband was always so affectionate to her that she could have no fear.

The first excitement past, Martin began to think about putting his affairs in order. His fortune was somewhat impaired by his long absence, and a journey to Biscaye was necessary, to take possession of certain property which was rightfully his, but upon which the State had already laid its hand. He spent several months in obtaining restitution of his father's house and farm, by means of some judicious concessions. When he had succeeded, he returned to Artigues, and set about entering

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into possession of his wife's property in like manner, and it was with reference to this subject that he called upon his Uncle Pierre one morning, some eleven months after his reappearance.

The old gentleman expected the visit; he was very courteous, offered Martin a chair and overwhelmed him with attentions, scrutinizing him all the while to read his thoughts, and he frowned when he discovered that his nephew had come with a fixed determination in his mind.

Martin first broke the ice.

"Uncle," he said, "I have come to thank you for the care you have taken of my poor wife's estate in my absence; she never would have been able to make it so productive herself. You have collected the income yourself, so as to keep it intact for her; it was the act of a good kinsman, and I expected nothing less from your affection. But now I am at home again, and at liberty to give my attention to it; we will adjust the accounts, if you please."

The other coughed and steadied his voice before replying; then he said, slowly, and measuring every word:

"The accounts are all adjusted, my dear nephew; thank heaven. I owe you nothing."

"What's that?" cried Martin, dumfounded, "the income ——"

"The income has been duly expended in providing for the support of your wife and child."

"What! a thousand livres for that purpose! and Bertrande living alone, such a simple, retired life! Nonsense, it's not possible!"

"The balance," rejoined the uncle, unmoved, "the balance went to pay the cost of sowing and harvesting."

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"When farm-laborers' wages are so low?"

"Here is my statement," said Pierre.

"And your statement is a lie!" cried Bertrande's husband.

Pierre thought it fitting to appear to be insulted, and to fly into a rage; his nephew, already enraged by his evident bad faith, took a still higher tone. He spoke of bringing suit against him; Pierre threatened to expel the insolent villain who dared insult him in his own house, and, suiting the action to the word, took him by the arm to put him out. Martin, in a furious passion, raised his hand against him.

"Against your uncle, scoundrel!"

Martin checked himself; but as he went out he muttered some abusive words, among which Pierre distinguished these:

"You are a forger!"

"That's a name I sha'n't forget!" cried the vindictive old man, as he slammed his door.

Proceedings were begun by Martin before the judge at Rieux; after some little time judgment was rendered therein declaring the accounts presented by Pierre to be inexact, and requiring the unfaithful agent to pay his nephew four hundred livres yearly. On the day that this sum was torn from his strong box, the former usurer uttered a cry of vengeance; but until he could gratify his hatred, he must needs dissemble it, and reply with a smiling face to the overtures that were made him looking to a reconciliation. It was some six months later, and on a most auspicious occasion that Martin once more set foot in his uncle's house. The bells were ringing to celebrate the birth of a child; there was great rejoicing at Bertrande's dwelling, and all her friends were assembled at the door, waiting only for the

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godfather, to escort the newly-born infant to the church. Joyous exclamations were heard on all sides when old Pierre with a huge bouquet at his side, made his appearance with Martin, and took Rose, his lovely fellow-sponsor by the hand. Bertrande was overjoyed at the reconciliation, and her dreams of the future were of the brightest. She was so happy! she was well repaid for her long loneliness; her regret was a thing of the past, her most ardent wishes were gratified; the interval between her former happiness and her present happiness was effaced, as if the chain had never been broken. She loved her husband, more dearly perhaps than she had ever loved him; he manifested the deepest affection for her, and she was grateful beyond expression. In short, she remembered her sorrow only the more fully to enjoy, by contrast, the new happiness heaven had sent her. The past was no longer dark in her eyes, and the future was without a cloud; the birth of a daughter, by knitting more closely than ever the bond which united her to her husband, seemed to furnish an additional pledge of her future felicity. Poor woman! the horizon, which seemed so cloudless, was soon to grow dark once more.

A traveling band of musicians and jugglers happened very opportunely to pass through the village on the evening of the baptismal ceremony. The guests gave them some little money, and Pierre questioned some of them. The leader was a Spaniard; Pierre took him into his house, and it was noticed that he was closeted with him for an hour or more, and that the man left the house the richer by a well-filled purse. Two days later Pierre informed his family that a matter of business required his attention in Picardy with one of his former partners, and he left home on that errand, promising to return in a short time.

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It was a terrible day for Bertrande when she next saw him. She was alone beside her baby's cradle, thinking of nothing except her probable awakening, when the door opened, and Pierre appeared. As soon as Bertrande looked in his face, she recoiled with an instinctive feeling of terror; for there was something at once baleful and joyous in the old man's expression; it was an expression of gratified hatred, of rage combined with triumph, and his smile frightened her.

At first she did not dare to question him, and motioned to him to sit down; but he walked straight to where she sat, and, raising her head, exclaimed in a voice of thunder:

"To your knees, Madame! and ask God's forgiveness!"

The young woman stared at him in utter amazement.

"Are you mad, Pierre?"

"You ought to know whether I am in my right senses."

"I, ask forgiveness! forgiveness for what, in God's name?"

"For the crime in which you are an accomplice."

"Crime! Explain yourself."

"Oh, yes!" retorted Pierre, sarcastically, "a woman thinks she is innocent when she has hidden her fault from every eye; she thinks that the truth will never come to light, and her conscience goes to sleep, forgetful of her wrong-doing. Here's a woman who believes hers securely hidden; chance favored her; her husband absent, perhaps dead, and another man, so like him in stature and features and manner, and so well tutored in his part, that everybody is taken in! What is it to wonder at that the woman too is willing to be taken in, being weak and passionate and tired of widowhood?"

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Bertrande listened without understanding; she tried to interrupt Pierre, but he went on:

"She could, without blushing in sight of the world, receive the stranger in her house, and accord him the name and the rights of her husband; she could claim to be faithful even in her guilt, appear constant even in her fickleness, and behind the veil of this mysterious resemblance, reconcile her conduct with the demands of honor, duty, and —— perhaps love."

"What in heaven's name do you mean?" cried the young woman, clasping her hands in anxious entreaty.

"That you are conniving at the imposture of a man who never was your husband."

Bertrande staggered under the violence of the blow, and clung to the nearest chair for support; in a moment she summoned all her strength to meet the extraordinary assault, and stepped toward the old man.

"My husband, your nephew, an impostor!"

"Didn't you know it?"

"Know it!"

At this cry, which came from the heart, Pierre realized that she was really ignorant, and that the blow he had dealt her was unexpected; he rejoined, therefore, more quietly:

"What! can it be that he has deceived you too, Bertrande?"

"Oh! Pierre, your words are killing me! you delight in torturing me! Enough of hints and mysteries! What do you conjecture? What do you know? Tell me frankly!"

"Are you brave enough to listen?"

"Yes," said the poor woman, trembling like a leaf.

"God is my witness that I would have been glad to conceal the truth from you; but I must tell you all, were

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it only to save your soul, which is now involved in a frightful snare—there is still time, if you follow my advice. Listen: the man with whom you are living, and who has taken your husband's name, this pretended Martin Guerre, in short, is a villain, a forger——"

"What do you dare to say?"

"What I have discovered. You see I had a vague suspicion, a disquieting presentiment; in spite of the perfect resemblance, I involuntarily hesitated, I found difficulty in recognizing my sister's blood in him, and the day he raised his hand against me—ah! that day I convicted him in my own heart. Chance proved the justice of my suspicions. A wandering Spaniard, a former trooper, who passed through the village one evening, turned out to have been present at the battle of Saint-Quentin; he saw Martin Guerre there, severely wounded in the leg. After the action, being wounded himself, he was taken to a village near by, and there he heard the surgeon say aloud that the poor wretch lying in the next room would have to have his leg cut off, and probably would not survive. When the door was opened he saw the man, and recognized Martin Guerre. That is what I learned from the Spaniard. Acting upon this information I pretended to have business away from home, and went to the village he mentioned, and questioned such of the inhabitants as were likely to have knowledge of the matter, and this is what I learned."

"Well?" said Bertrande, with pallid cheeks, and panting with anxiety.

"The wounded man's leg was amputated."

"Heavens!"

"And he died, so they said, a few hours later, as the surgeon prophesied, or so they supposed, for they saw no more of him."

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Bertrande was utterly crushed for some moments by this revelation; but she soon cast aside such horrifying thoughts.

"Oh! no, no!" she cried, "it cannot be; it's a fable invented to ruin him, to ruin us all."

"What! you don't believe me?"

"No, never!"

"Oh! say rather that you pretend not to believe me; the truth has entered your soul, but you choose still to reject it. Think upon your soul's salvation, I tell you."

"Be silent, wicked man! No, God would not try me thus! What proofs, what evidence is in support of what you say?"

"The statements I have told you of."

"No others?"

"No, not as yet."

"Fine proofs, indeed! the tale of a vagabond, who flattered your hatred to get a little money from you, the reports current in a little village, memories many years old, and lastly the word of such a one as you, who are influenced solely by desire for revenge, who have sworn to make him pay dear for bringing to light your rapacity, and who are a man of inveterate passions. No, Pierre, no, I do not believe you, I will never believe you!"

"Others will be less incredulous perhaps, and if I publicly accuse the impostor——"

"I will give you the lie."

She strode up to him, her eyes gleaming with virtuous wrath:

"Leave this house!" she exclaimed, "for you are the impostor!"

"Ah! I shall find a way to convince you, and make you admit everything," cried the furious old man.

He went out, and Bertrande sank overcome upon a chair.

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What took place in the poor woman's heart? All the strength which had sustained her against Pierre forsook her as soon as she found herself alone; in spite of her stubborn resistance to suspicion, the horrible shadow of doubt crept into her heart, and replaced the clear-burning torch of confidence which had guided her until then; and the doubt, alas! assailed her honor and her love at the same time, for she loved with all a woman's clinging affection. In the same way that poison, when once taken into the system, makes its way gradually into all the veins, corrupting the blood, and vitiating all the sources of vitality, until it brings about at last the total disorganization of the human body, in the same way does suspicion, that other deadly poison, do its fatal work in the heart to which it has found its way.

Bertrande recalled with a shock of alarm the first impression she was conscious of when Martin returned, her secret involuntary repugnance, her astonishment to find that she did not feel instinctively and powerfully attracted toward the husband she had so bitterly lamented. She remembered also, as if it then occurred to her for the first time that Martin, who was formerly impulsive and quick-tempered and thoughtless, seemed now very deliberate and self-controlled. She had attributed this change in his character to the development of age, but now she shuddered to think that there might be another cause. Some other circumstances also came to her mind; there had been lapses of memory on her husband's part in some trivial matters; he had often failed to answer to the name of Martin, and had often mistaken the road when going to a little hermitage which they used often to visit in the old days; he could not reply when she spoke to him in the Basque tongue, and yet she had learned from him what little she knew of it. Furthermore, he had

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always, since his return, avoided writing before her. Did he fear that she would notice some difference between his handwriting now and what it used to be? All these matters, to which she had paid but little attention, acquired a terrifying degree of importance when they were brought side by side. Bertrande was disturbed beyond expression. Should she remain in uncertainty, or seek enlightenment which might put an end to her happiness forever? And how could she make sure of the truth? By questioning the culprit? By throwing him into confusion? By watching to see if he lost color? By tearing a confession from his lips? But the man had lived with her two years, he was the father of her child, and she could not degrade him without degrading herself; when she had once sought an explanation, she could not punish him without ruining herself, or forgive him without blushing. To reproach him for his imposture, and then say nothing and keep his secret would be to wreck her life for mere sport; to make a scandal, and bring the law down upon him as an impostor, would be to bring dishonor upon her own head and her daughter's. Night found her a prey to the most harrowing perplexity; she was too weak to struggle longer with the problem, and as she felt herself shivering from head to foot she went to bed. A violent attack of fever followed, and for several days she hovered between life and death. During her illness, Martin Guerre was most devoted in his attentions. She was touched to the heart, having one of those warm, impulsive natures, which are as easily moved by a kindness as by an insult. When she was on the way to recovery, and her reason began to return, she had a confused recollection of what had taken place, and she thought that she had had a ghastly dream. She inquired if Pierre had been to see her. Pierre had not been inside the door. Such conduct

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on his part could only be explained on the assumption that such a scene had actually occurred. Thereupon the whole thing came to her mind; the charge made by Pierre, her own observations which tended to establish it, and lastly her bitter suffering. She made inquiries as to the current gossip in the village, and found that Pierre had not spoken. Why? Had he found that his suspicions were unjust? or was he awaiting further proof? Her heart-breaking uncertainty was not relieved; before coming to a conclusion as to Martin's guilt or innocence she determined to watch him more closely.

After all, how could one believe that God would have fashioned two faces so like, two beings so exactly similar in every respect, and would have set them down together in the world, upon the same road, to deceive and destroy an unfortunate woman? A terrible thought came to her mind,—a thought which naturally presented itself first of all in that superstitious age—that the enemy of the human race had assumed the human form and appeared in the guise of a dead man, to lure one more soul to hell. She nearly went mad at the idea; she hurried to church, paid for masses to be said, and prayed with the utmost fervor. She expected some day to see the demon come forth from the body which he had restored to life; but her offerings and her prayers had no effect. At last, however, heaven sent her an inspiration which she marveled exceedingly that she had not had before. If it is the tempter, she said to herself, who has taken the shape of my beloved husband, he must have reproduced his face and form exactly, for his power in the way of working evil is unlimited, so that there should be no single point of difference, however slight; on the other hand, if this is simply a man, who resembles him, God must have distinguished them in some way.

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She then remembered, and her failure to remember it earlier is accounted for by the fact that before Pierre's accusation she had no suspicion, and afterwards her distress and her illness almost deprived her of her reason—she remembered, we say, that her husband used to have on his left shoulder, just at the base of the neck, one of those small, almost imperceptible marks which never disappear. But Martin wore his hair very long, and it was difficult to ascertain whether he did or did not bear that mark. One night, while he was asleep, Bertrande cut away the hair at the spot where the mark should have been—it was not there!

Convinced at last of the imposture, Bertrande passed through a moment of inexpressible agony. This man, whom for two years she had loved and cherished, whom she had received in her arms as her deeply lamented husband, was an infamous villain! She had sinned, unwittingly and involuntarily. Her daughter was the fruit of an illicit union, and the curse of heaven must be visited upon such sacrilegious conduct. To cap the climax of her woe, she bore in her bosom another pledge of her guilty love. The poor creature longed for death; but her religion and her love for her children restrained her. Kneeling beside the cradles of her son and daughter, she besought the forgiveness of the father of the first for the father of the other.

She could not make up her mind to declare his infamy herself.

"Oh! thou, who art no more, and whom I loved so dearly, knowest if a guilty thought ever entered my heart! When I saw this man, I thought that I saw thee; when I was happy I thought that I owed my happiness to thee; it was thee whom I loved in him; and thou canst not desire that I should bring shame and

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scandal upon my children and their mother by making my misfortune public!"

She rose to her feet somewhat calmer; it seemed to to her as if her duty were marked out before her by an inspiration from on high. To suffer in silence was the course she adopted, a life of abnegation and sacrifice, which she offered to God by way of atonement for her involuntary sin. But who can fathom the strange workings of the heart? She should have held the man in utter detestation, who had lured her into complicity in a crime, an unmasked impostor, the mere sight of whom should have filled her with contempt—and yet she loved him! Long habit, the ascendancy he had acquired over her, the love he lavished upon her, a thousand motives, in short, of which the heart alone knows the secret, exerted so great an influence over the woman, that instead of accusing him and calling down curses upon him, she sought excuses for him in the excess of a passion which had doubtless led him to usurp another's name. Indeed, she dreaded punishment for him more than scandal for herself; and although she was firmly resolved no longer to accord him the rights he had purchased by a crime, she trembled at the idea of losing his heart. The consideration which did more than any other to persuade her to keep silence forever as to her discovery was this: a single word implying that she was aware of the deception would have raised an insurmountable barrier between them.

She could not, however, put such constraint upon her feelings, that no external indication of them appeared. She shed abundant tears in secret, of which her eyes gave witness; several times Martin asked her the cause of her sadness; she tried to smile as she made some excuse, but at once became pensive and gloomy as

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before. Martin attributed her melancholy to caprice; he noticed that Bertrande was losing her bloom, that the wrinkles were beginning to appear, and he thought that the fading of her beauty betokened the premature effects of age. The ingrate thereupon became less devoted to her; his absences were more frequent and of longer duration; he did not conceal his annoyance and disgust at the way she watched him, for she kept her eyes fixed upon him constantly, and observed with dismay his changed demeanor and his growing coldness. Thus the poor woman who had sacrificed everything to retain at least the man's love, saw that that love was gradually slipping away from her.

Another also was watching him. Pierre Guerre, who, since his tentative attack upon Bertrande, seemed to have acquired no fresh information, did not dare to make public his suspicions unsupported by positive proof; and so he lost no opportunity of spying all the goings and comings of his pretended nephew, hoping that chance would put him upon the track of some discovery. He divined, too, from Bertrande's melancholy that she had acquired certain proof, and had decided to conceal it.

Martin was at this time seeking to sell a part of his patrimony; this business necessitated frequent consultations with the lawyers in the neighboring town, and he went twice a week to Rieux. To save fatigue he was in the habit of leaving home in the saddle about seven at night, sleeping at Rieux, and returning in the afternoon of the next day. This procedure was remarked by his enemy; and he was speedily convinced that a portion of the time apparently devoted to this trip was in reality otherwise employed.

One evening about ten o'clock (it was quite dark),

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the door of a cottage which stood by itself about half a gun-shot from the village opened softly, and gave egress to a man wrapped in a great cloak, followed by a young woman who walked with him across the fields. When they reached the spot where they were to separate they exchanged a farewell kiss and a few loving words. The lover untied his horse, which was fastened to a tree, leaped into the saddle, and galloped away toward Rieux. When the sound of the horse's hoofs could no longer be heard, the young woman walked slowly back to her home, lost in thought. As she approached the door, a man suddenly stepped out from the shadow of the house and barred the way. In her terror she was about to cry out, but he seized her arm and bade her be silent.

"Rose," he said in a low tone, "I know all. The man who just left your house is your lover; in order to receive him without risk you put your old husband to sleep with a drug stolen from Master Marcel, your father. This thing has been going on for a month; twice each week at seven o'clock you open your door to the gallant, and he doesn't come out and start for Rieux until ten. I know the man, too—I am his uncle."

Almost paralyzed with terror, Rose threw herself on her knees, and begged for mercy.

"Yes," rejoined Pierre, "you may well be terrified, for your secret is in my hands; I can disclose it, and ruin you forever in the eyes of the world."

"You won't do that," said the guilty woman, clasping her hands.

"I might inform your husband," he continued, "that his bed is dishonored, and tell him the cause of the heavy sleep which is made use of to betray him."

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"He would kill me!"

"I know it; he is jealous, and he is an Italian—he would know how to avenge himself—as I do."

"But I have never injured you," she cried, weeping bitterly; "mercy! mercy! spare me!"

"On one condition."

"What is it?"

"Come with me."

Desperate and distracted, Rose let him lead her whither he would.

Bertrande had just finished her nightly prayer, and was about to retire, when she was startled by a loud, hasty knocking at her door. Thinking that perhaps some neighbor needed help, she ran to open it. What was her surprise when she found herself face to face with a woman in disordered garments, whom Pierre held by the arm, crying excitedly:

"There is your judge! to her, to Bertrande, you must confess everything"

Bertrande at first did not recognize the woman, who fell at her feet, overwhelmed by Pierre's voice.

"Tell the truth here," he thundered, "or I will tell it at your own home, to your husband!"

"Oh! Madame, kill me," said the wretched woman, hiding her face; "let me die by your hand rather than by his!"

Bertrande was utterly unable to understand this extraordinary scene; but she recognized Rose.

"Pray, Madame, what is it? Why are you here, pale and weeping, at this hour? and why did Pierre bring you here? I am to judge you! he said, if so, of what crime are you guilty?"

"If Martin were here he could give you an answer," said Pierre.

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At his words a jealous pang shot through Bertrande's heart, and all her old suspicions awoke.

"What? What do you say? My husband——"

"Came out of this woman's house a few moments ago; for a month they have been meeting in secret and deceiving you; I have seen them, and she will not dare contradict me."

"Ah! Madame!" cried Rose, still kneeling.

The cry was a confession. Bertrande turned pale as death.

"O heaven!" she muttered; "deceived, betrayed, and by him!"

"For a month," the old man repeated.

"Oh! the vile wretch!" she exclaimed, her indignation waxing hotter with every word; "so all his life is but a lie; he made sport of my credulousness, and now he makes sport of my love! Ah! he doesn't know me! he thinks he can safely defy me, who hold his fate, his honor, his very life in my hands!"

Turning to the guilty woman she said:

"By what vile artifice did you steal his love, wretched creature? By what witchcraft, or poisoned philter, of which your worthy father gave you the secret?"

"Alas! Madame, my weakness is my only crime, and my only excuse as well. Long ago, when I was a girl, I loved him, Madame, and now my memories of the past have been my ruin."

"Memories! Do you, too, believe that you are in love with the same man? Are you the dupe of his imposture, or are you pretending to be, so as to have a shred of excuse to cover your sin?"

It was Rose's turn to fail to understand.

"Yes," Bertrande continued, with growing excitement, "it was a small matter for the villain to usurp the rights

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of husband and father; the better to play his part, he must needs cozen the mistress, too, by his resemblance. Ha! ha! it's a fine joke, is it not? So you, too, Rose, believed that he was your former lover! I, his wife, am certainly excusable for believing that I was faithful to my husband!"

"What does this mean?" demanded Rose, with renewed alarm.

"It means that the fellow's an impostor, and that I will unmask him! Oh! for vengeance! vengeance!"

Pierre stepped forward.

"Bertrande," he said "so long as I believed you to be happy, and feared to disturb your happiness, I held my peace; I restrained my just wrath, and spared the usurper of my nephew's name and estates; now, may I speak?"

"Yes," she replied in a hollow voice.

"You will not contradict me?"

Her only reply was to sit down at the table, and with trembling hand write a few lines hastily, and hand the paper to the old man. He glanced over it, and his eye sparkled with joy.

"Yes, vengeance on him! but for her—pity! let her humiliation be her only punishment. I promised silence in exchange for her confession; do you agree?"

Bertrande made a scornful gesture of assent.

"You may go, without fear," said Pierre, and Rose slunk from the room, followed soon after by him.

Bertrande, left alone, was prostrated by the intense emotion she had experienced; indignation gave place to deathly depression. She reflected on what she had done, and of the scandal it would bring upon her head. At that moment her daughter awoke and held out her little arms with a smile, calling for her father. Her

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father! Ah! he was a great villain, but was it for her to destroy him, to invoke the action of the law, and subject him to the death penalty after she had held him in her arms? To bring infamy upon his name, when it would attach equally to her and the daughter born of her, and to that other child to be born some day? So far as he was guilty in God's sight, it was for God to punish him; so far as he was guilty toward her, it was her duty to crush him with her scorn; but to call upon her fellow-men to wash away the insult, to admit them to all the secrets of her life, to profane the sanctity of the marriage-bed, and invite all the world to feast upon the shocking scandal—this was what she, in her hasty wrath, had done! She repented bitterly her mad haste, and hoped to avoid its natural results; notwithstanding the darkness and the bad weather, she hurried to Pierre's house to withdraw her denunciation at any cost. But Pierre was not there; he had called for his horse and ridden off at full speed to Rieux. Bertrande's complaint was in the hands of the magistrates.

At daybreak, the house at which Martin Guerre lodged during his visits to the town was surrounded by halbardiers. He faced them with assurance, and demanded to know what they wanted. When he was informed of the subject-matter of the charge he turned slightly pale, but soon recovered himself, and went without demur before the magistrate. There Bertrande's petition was read to him, declaring him an *impostor*, and alleging that he did *falsely, boldly and treacherously abuse her confidence by assuming the name of Martin Guerre, and representing himself to be the said Martin Guerre.* She prayed that he should be *condemned to ask forgiveness of God, the king and herself.*

The accused listened tranquilly, and without embar-

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rassment; he manifested no other emotion than profound surprise at the step taken by his wife, who, after living with him more than two years since his return, now for the first time thought of disputing his right to the name she had so long given him. As he was ignorant even of the suspicions Bertrande had conceived, to say nothing of the certain knowledge she had acquired, and the jealous outburst which induced her to make the complaint, his surprise was quite natural, and did not seem to be feigned. He attributed the whole affair to the instigation of his uncle, Pierre Guerre; that old man, he said, influenced by rapacity and thirst for revenge, chose to contest his name and title, to despoil him of his property, which amounted to some sixteen or eighteen thousand livres; and to attain that object, the villain did not shrink from suborning Bertrande, and inducing her to present, at the risk of dishonoring herself forever, this slanderous charge, which was incredible and horrible in the mouth of a legitimate wife.

"Ah! I do not blame her," he cried; "her suffering must be greater than mine if such a suspicion has really entered her heart; but I deplore the facility with which she opened her ears to the base slanders of my enemy."

His unbounded assurance had its effect upon the magistrate. He was taken back to prison, and two days later was again taken out to undergo the customary examination.

He began by explaining his long absence, caused, he said, by a family quarrel, which Bertrande remembered as well as he. He described the life he had led during those eight years, wandering about over the country at first, from curiosity and love of travel, then crossing the frontier, revisiting Biscaye, his native province, and entering the service of the Cardinal of Burgos; his enlistment

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in the army of the King of Spain, how he was wounded at Saint-Quentin, taken to the next village, and cured, notwithstanding the threat of amputation. It was after that, he said, that he could no longer resist his burning desire to see his wife once more, and his child and his adopted country, so he returned to Artigues, where he was fortunate enough to be recognized without hesitation by everybody, not excepting even his uncle, Pierre Guerre, who now was so inhuman as to undertake to disavow him. Had he not indeed been overwhelmed with kindness by that man, until he had thought best to demand an accounting from him? If he would have basely consented to sacrifice his property, and defraud his children, nothing would have been heard about his being an impostor. "But," he added, "I persisted, and a violent quarrel followed, in which my anger perhaps carried me too far. Pierre, the crafty and revengeful, held his peace, and waited. He took his time and made his plans to weave this accusation against me, hoping thereby the better to attain his ends, use the law to assist his greed, and obtain, by means of a judgment extorted from the shocked religious sensibilities of the magistrates, the booty that he coveted, and revenge for the harsh words I used to him."

To these explanations, which did not lack probability, the accused added earnest protestations of innocence; he boldly demanded that his wife should be confronted with him, maintaining that she could not act out in his presence the part that was assigned to her, and that the truth would triumph in a heart which was incited by nothing else than the blind passion of his persecutor. He called upon the magistrate to do justice to his good faith, and by that token to sentence his slanderers to the same penalties they had invoked

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against him. He demanded that Bertrande de Rolles, his wife, should be sequestrated in a house where she would be out of reach of subornation, and that he should himself be declared innocent, and awarded damages and costs.

After these declarations, which were made with much heat and apparent sincerity, he answered freely all that the magistrate asked him; we give the questions and answers almost as they were taken down.

"In what part of Biscaye were you born?"

"In the village of Aymès, province of Guipuscoa."

"What were the names of your father and mother?"

"Antonio Guerre, and Maria Toreada."

"Are they still living?"

"My father died June 15, 1530, and my mother survived him three years and twelve days."

"Have you brothers or sisters?"

"I had a brother who lived only three months; my four sisters, Inez, Dorothea, Marietta and Pedrina, came with me to live at Artigues, and are still there; they all recognized me."

"What day were you married?"

"January 10, 1539."

"Who were present at the ceremony?"

"My father-in-law and mother-in-law, my uncle, my sisters, Master Marcel, his daughter Rose, neighbor Claude Perrin, who got tipsy at the wedding feast, and the poet Giraud, who composed some verses in our honor."

"What priest united you?"

"The old curate Pascal Guérin, whom I did not find here when I came home."

"What special incidents occurred on your wedding-day?"

"Our neighbor, Catherine Boëre, brought the collation,

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called *media-noche*, at midnight. She has recognized me, also old Marguerite, who has lived in the family from that day to this?"

"What day was your son born?"

"February 16, 1548, not until we had been married nine years; I was but twelve years of ago when I married Bertrande, and I did not attain maturity for several years thereafter."

"At what time did you leave Artigues?"

"In August, 1549. As I left the village I met Claude Perrin and Pascal the curate, and bade them adieu. I went toward Beauvais; I passed through Orléans, Bourges, Limoges, Bordeaux, Toulouse. Do you wish for the names of the persons I saw and spoke with in those places? You shall have them. What more can I say?"

It was the fact that no statement ever conformed more closely to the truth. Martin Guerre's acts could not have been recounted more accurately, and the conclusion was inevitable that it must be himself who thus described his own life; for, as the historian remarks, alluding to the fable of Amphitryon, Mercury no more faithfully reproduced all the acts and gestures and words of his double, than did the false Martin Guerre those of the true.

In accordance with the request of the accused, Bertrande de Rolles was sequestrated, that she might be out of reach of Pierre Guerre's instigations. The latter meanwhile was losing no time, and during the month which was employed in examining all the witnesses cited by Martin, his untiring adversary, acting upon a vague clew, undertook a journey from which he did not return alone.

All the testimony agreed with the declaration of the

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accused; he was so informed in his prison, and congratulated himself upon it, hoping for speedy deliverance. At last one day he was taken before the magistrate, who informed him that his statements were confirmed by all the witnesses he had mentioned.

"Do you know no others?" added the magistrate. "Have you no other relatives than those you have named?"

"None," was the reply.

"What do you say to this one?" retorted the magistrate, suddenly throwing open a door, through which came an elderly man, who threw his arms around the accused man's neck, crying:

"My nephew!"

The accused shook from head to foot; but it was for an instant only; he speedily recovered from the first shock, and gazing coolly at the new-comer, said to him:

"Who are you?"

"What's that?" was the reply; "don't you recognize me? Have you the assurance to deny me, your mother's brother, Carbon Barreau, the old soldier, who trotted you on his knee when you were a youngster; who taught you later to carry a musket, and whom you fell in with during the war at an inn in Picardy where you were in hiding? Since then I have sought you everywhere, talked about you, described your face and your figure, until at last a worthy bourgeois from this province offered to bring me here, where I did not expect, poor boy, to find my sister's son imprisoned and ironed like a criminal. What is his crime, pray, Monsieur *le juge?*"

"You shall know?" the magistrate replied. "So you identify this man as your nephew? You assert that his name is——"

"Arnauld du Thill, called *Pansette*, from his father's

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name—Jacques Pansa; Thérèse Barreau, my sister, was his mother; he was born at the village of Sagias."

"What have you to say in reply?" said the magistrate, turning to the accused.

"Three things," he rejoined, with marvelous *sang-froid*; "either this man is mad, or he is paid to lie, or he is mistaken."

The other was stricken dumb with astonishment.

The first movement made by the false Martin did not escape the magistrate's observation; and he was equally impressed by the evident sincerity of Carbon Barreau. He set on foot further investigations; other residents of Sagias were summoned to Rieux, and all agreed in identifying the accused with the Arnauld du Thill, who was born and grew to manhood under their eyes. Several of them deposed that from childhood he had evinced vicious propensities, that lying and theft were familiar to him, and that he did not shrink from blasphemously making use of God's holy name to conceal the falsity of his impudent statements. From this testimony the magistrate very naturally concluded that Arnauld du Thill was quite capable of playing the rôle of an impostor, and that his impudence in maintaining his identity was characteristic of the man. Furthermore, he remarked that, while he claimed to have been born in Biscaye, he knew but a few words in the Basque tongue, and used them in any but the right way. He also heard another witness, who deposed that the real Martin Guerre was an expert wrestler and fencer, while the accused, when he took a hand at either, showed a great lack of skill. Finally a cobbler was questioned and his testimony was not the least convincing:

"Martin Guerre," he declared, "used to wear twelves;

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what was my surprise, when I measured this man's foot, to find that he wore nines!"

In view of this cumulative testimony, both of persons and circumstances, the Rieux magistrate, setting aside the other evidence, which he ascribed to public credulity influenced by the extraordinary resemblance, passed judgment upon Bertrande's petition, although she had refused to prosecute, and had maintained an obstinate silence. In that judgment he declared Arnauld du Thill *accused and duly convicted of imposture, and condemned therefor to lose his head; after which his body should be quartered, and the four pieces exposed at the four corners of the town.*

This judgment, as soon as it was known, aroused divers comments in the town. The enemies of the condemned man belauded the magistrate's wisdom, while less prejudiced minds cried out against his rash haste; for he might well have hesitated in the face of such contradictory evidence. Furthermore, did not the fact that he was in possession of the name, to say nothing of the situation of the children, call for greater caution? And ought anything less than absolutely irrefragable proof to be allowed to wipe out in an instant a period of two years, during which no question had ever arisen?

The condemned man appealed from this judgment to the Parliament of Toulouse. That tribunal thought fit to investigate the affair somewhat more carefully than the magistrate had done, and began by ordering that Bertrande de Rolles and Pierre be confronted with Arnauld du Thill.

Who can describe the sensations of an accused man, when, after having been once condemned, he approaches a second trial. The agony he underwent before is renewed; hope, weakened by the first defeat, resumes,

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nevertheless, its hold upon his imagination, which clings anxiously to it. The efforts by which the strength has been once exhausted must be begun afresh; the last supreme struggle is on, a struggle the more desperate, in that one has less strength to sustain it. But the athlete with whom we have to deal was not of those who are easily discouraged; he summoned all his energy and all his resolution, determined to come out victorious from the new struggle that was upon him.

The magistrates assembled in the great hall of the parliament and the accused was brought in. He was confronted first with Pierre. In his presence he maintained a tranquil demeanor, and allowed him to speak without evincing any excitement. When he had finished he assumed an indignant tone and heaped reproaches upon him; spoke of his greed, his avarice, his oaths of vengeance, the influence he had brought to bear upon Bertrande, the underhand manœuvres he had employed to gain his end, and the extraordinary zeal which he had shown in marshaling witnesses, accusers and slanderers against him. He defied Pierre to prove that he was not Martin Guerre, his nephew, when he had recognized him and embraced him before everybody; and averred that his suspicions dated from the day of their violent quarrel. His language was so forcible and vehement, that Pierre was confused, and could not reply. The interview resulted entirely to the advantage of the accused; he towered above his adversary from the pinnacle of innocence unjustly assailed, and Pierre seemed as disconcerted as any slanderer.

When he found himself in Bertrande's presence, a very different scene took place. The poor woman, pale and wasted by sorrow, completely prostrated, came before the tribunal with tottering steps, and seemed on the

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point of fainting. She tried to collect her strength, but as soon as she perceived the accused, she lowered her eyes, and covered her face with both hands. He approached her, and in the softest tone, implored her not to persist in an accusation which would doom him to death, not to revenge herself thus for the grievances she might justly have against him, although he had no serious offence, with which to reproach himself.

Bertrande shuddered, and muttered low:

"And Rose?"

"Aha!" he exclaimed at that revelation, and at once adopted his course of action.

"Messieurs," he said to the magistrates, "this woman is jealous! Ten years ago, when I left her, her suspicions were the cause of my voluntary exile. Now she accuses me of guilty relations with the same person? I neither deny nor admit it; but I aver that it is jealousy, blind jealousy, which, with the assistance of my uncle's suggestions, guided Bertrande's hand when she signed her denunciation of me."

Bertrande made no reply.

"Do you dare"—he turned to her as he spoke—"do you dare to swear before God that it was not jealousy which first made you think of denouncing me?"

"Do you," she rejoined, "dare swear that my suspicions were unfounded?"

"You see, Messieurs," he cried triumphantly, "the passion shows itself here before your eyes. Whether I am guilty or innocent of the offence with which she charges me, is not the question you have to decide; it is another question to which your consciences are addressed —whether you can receive the testimony of this woman who, after she has publicly acknowledged me, received me in her house, and lived with me for two years

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in perfect harmony, has chosen in a fit of anger and revengefulness, to belie all her past words and acts. Ah! Bertrande," he added, "if only my life were at stake, I believe that I would forgive a mad freak of which love is the cause and the excuse; but you are a mother—think of that; my punishment will rebound upon my poor daughter, who has had the ill-luck to be born since my return, upon the child you are carrying in your womb, and whom you condemn beforehand to curse the union which gave him birth. Remember, Bertrande, that you must answer to God for what you are doing."

The poor woman fell on her knees, sobbing as if her heart would break.

"Now," he continued, in a solemn voice, "I call upon you, Bertrande de Rolles, my wife, to make oath here upon the Christ that I am an impostor."

The crucifix was held before Bertrande's face; she made a movement to thrust it aside, tried to speak, feebly exclaimed "No," and fell in a swoon. She was taken from the hall.

This scene made a powerful impression upon the magistrates. It was hard to believe that an impostor, whoever he might be, could have sufficient audacity and presence of mind to make sport thus of all that is held most sacred. A new inquiry was begun, which, instead of clearing away the mist of doubt, plunged the affair in constantly increasing obscurity. Of thirty witnesses who were examined, more than three-fourths agreed in swearing that he who had taken the name of Martin Guerre was really Martin Guerre. Never was greater perplexity caused by more extraordinary circumstances. Those persons who recognized Arnauld du Thill were met by directly contrary assertions. He hardly understood a word of Basque, it was said, although he was

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born in Biscaye. What was there surprising in that, since he left his native province at the age of three? He was awkward at wrestling and fencing; but as he had been long without practice in those exercises he might well have forgotten them. The shoemaker who formerly made his shoes did not recognize his measure, but he might have made a mistake formerly, or now.

The accused strengthened his defence, by going over the circumstances of his first interview with Bertrande after his return—the thousand and one details which he recalled and which none but he could know; the letters he had in his possession—an inexplicable fact, unless he was Martin Guerre. How happened it that he was wounded over the right eye and in the leg, as the missing man was? How happened it that the old family servant, his four sisters, his Uncle Pierre, and so many others, to whom he had mentioned facts known to him alone—how happened it that the whole village, in short, recognized and identified him? And then the very *liaison* which Bertrande suspected, and which had caused her jealous rage—if it existed, was it not an additional proof in support of his claim, since the person involved in it, no less interested and keen-sighted as mistress, than the other as lawful wife, had also recognized in him her former lover? Was this not a fagot of proofs, which should shed a convincing light? Suppose an impostor coming for the first time to a place where all the inhabitants are strangers to him; suppose him to conceive the guilty scheme of representing a man who once lived there, who had interests of all sorts in the place, who lived his life amid a thousand different scenes, and whose thoughts and secrets might have been known to any one of many people; who had a wife, that is to say, a person under whose eyes he passed almost his whole life, who

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studied him continually and with whom he must have had conversations upon an infinity of subjects; how could that impostor sustain the character for a single day without a failure of memory? From the physical and moral impossibility of playing such a part the conclusion was inevitable that the accused, who had persisted in it for two years, was the real Martin Guerre.

There was, in truth, no method of reasoning which would account for the successful carrying out of such a scheme, unless a charge of magic should be brought against him. For a moment there was some thought of turning him over to the ecclesiastical tribunals, but it was necessary to furnish proofs, and the magistrates hesitated. It is an equitable principle, which has become an established maxim in law, that the accused shall always have the benefit of a doubt; but at the time of which we are writing, such truths were far from being admitted; guilt was presumed rather than innocence, and the torture, which was invented to extort admissions from those who could not otherwise be convicted, can be explained on no other ground than the certainty of the judges as to the guilt of those brought before them; for it would never have occurred to any one to inflict such punishment on one who might be innocent. However, notwithstanding this habit of prejudging, which is still kept up in our own day by certain agents of the ministry, who are too generally disposed to see a guilty man in one who is suspected, Martin Guerre's judges dared neither to convict him themselves of imposture, or to invoke the arm of the Church. In this conflict of opposing testimony, which seemed to reveal the truth only to obscure it still more than before in this chaos of argument and conjecture, which gave forth rays of light only to extinguish them again, consideration

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for the family prevailed. Bertrande's admitted good faith, and the future of the children seemed to be sufficient motives to warrant proceeding with the greatest caution, and the status the accused had acquired ought not to be disturbed except upon sufficient evidence. And so the parliament postponed the cause, everything to remain *in statu quo* pending a more exhaustive inquiry. During the interval, several of the relatives and friends of the accused became responsible for his appearance when wanted and he was allowed to go at large in the neighborhood of Artigues, although he was closely watched.

Thus Bertrande saw him once more by her side, making one of her family, as if no doubt of the legitimacy of their union had ever arisen. What must have been the current of her thoughts during their long tête-a-têtes? She had accused the man of imposture, and now, despite her secret reasons for absolute certainty, she must pretend to have no suspicion, and to have been misled,—must humiliate herself before the impostor to obtain pardon for her insane proceeding; such a course of conduct was imposed upon her by her refusal to make oath, which amounted to a public abjuration of the charge. Thenceforth, in order to act out her part, and save the honor of her children she must treat the man as her husband, adopt a submissive, repentant demeanor toward him, and manifest perfect confidence in him; there was no other way to rehabilitate him, and lull to rest the suspicions of the authorities. Who can imagine the suffering of Martin Guerre's widow in this unending struggle? It was a secret between herself and God; but she looked at her daughter, thought of her approaching confinement, which seemed near at hand, and took fresh courage.

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One evening, just at nightfall, she was sitting beside him in the most retired part of the garden; her daughter was playing upon her knees, while the adventurer, absorbed in some gloomy train of thought, was absent-mindedly patting little Sanxi's blonde head. They were both silent; for at the bottom of their hearts they were well aware what each must be thinking of the other, and as they could not adopt a tone of familiarity, and did not dare exhibit too great reserve, the hours that they passed together, when no witnesses were by were long and dull and silent.

Suddenly the silence of their retreat was broken in upon by a loud noise; there were exclamations of surprise mingled with angry words; they heard steps hurriedly approaching, the gate was noisily thrown open, and old Marguerite appeared, pale and gasping, almost breathless. Bertrande ran to meet her in great astonishment, followed by her husband; but when they were near enough to question her, she could answer only by inarticulate sounds, pointing with a terrified expression to the yard in front of the house. They looked in that direction, and saw a man standing in the doorway; as they drew near the man stepped between them. He was tall and dark; his clothes were torn, and he had a wooden leg. His face was very stern as he looked at Bertrande, who uttered a shriek, and fell senseless to the ground—she had recognized her husband!

Arnauld du Thill stood as if turned to stone. While Marguerite, almost beside herself, was trying to recall her mistress to life, the neighbors, attracted by the outcry, invaded the house, and stood dumfounded at the extraordinary resemblance. The features, the figure and the bearing were identical; it was, so to speak, a single being in two persons. The two men gazed at each other

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in a sort of terror; in that superstitious age it was inevitable that the idea of sorcery and the intervention of the devil should come to the mind of those present; they all crossed themselves, expecting momentarily to see the lightning from heaven strike one of the men, or the earth open under his feet. Nothing of that sort occurred, but the authorities were notified, and ordered the arrest of both, that the strange mystery might be solved.

The man with the wooden leg, being questioned by the magistrates, averred that he came from Spain, where he had been detained until then, in the first place by his wound, and afterwards by lack of money. He had made the journey on foot, almost as a beggar. He gave the same reasons as the other Martin Guerre for his departure from Artigues, namely a conjugal quarrel caused by jealousy, a desire to see the country, and a thirst for adventure. He returned, he said, to Biscaye where he was born; there he entered the service of the Cardinal of Burgos; then the cardinal's brother took him to war, and he served in the Spanish army; at the battle of Saint-Quentin his leg was shattered by a ball from an arquebus. Thus far his story agreed exactly with what the judges had already heard from the mouth of his double. But at that point they diverged. Martin Guerre said that he was taken to a house by a man whose features he could hardly distinguish; that he thought he was dying, and that he passed several hours of which he could give no account, doubtless owing to the fever which set his brain on fire. He remembered feeling a fearful pain, and when he came to himself the wounded leg was gone. For a long while he lay between life and death; but he was cared for by peasants who saved him from almost certain death, although his convalescence was very slow. Between the time when he fell upon the battlefield and

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MARTIN GUERRE

The return of the true Martin Guerre.

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his coming to his senses, the papers which he carried about him disappeared, but he could not charge the good people, who had nursed him so sedulously, with the theft. After his restoration to health, he was without resources, and waited until chance should make it possible for him to return to France to see his wife and son. He had endured privations of every sort, and defied fatigue, and at last, in an enfeebled condition, but overjoyed to be at the end of his misfortunes, had arrived unsuspectingly at his own home; but there, his old servant's alarm, and the few broken words she let fall gave him a premonition of evil to come; the sight of his wife accompanied by a man so like himself, struck him dumb; the state of things had since been explained to him, and now he regretted that he had not died of his wound.

The whole narrative bore the impress of truth; but when the other prisoner was called upon to meet this new aspect of the affair, he adhered to his former replies, maintained their accuracy, and affirmed anew that he was the real Martin Guerre, and that the new arrival could be no other than Arnauld du Thill, the clever impostor, who was said to resemble him so closely that the people of the village of Sagias thought that they recognized him in him.

He made no abatement of his pretensions when the two men were confronted with each other; he exhibited the same assurance, the same firm, bold demeanor, while the other, calling upon God and man to witness his sincerity, deplored his unhappy fate in most pathetic terms.

The judges were in dire perplexity, for the case seemed to grow more and more complicated, and the question for them to decide was as uncertain and blind as ever. Appearances and testimony were mutually contradictory,

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the probabilities were perhaps in favor of one, and people's sympathies leaned toward the other, but absolute proof was lacking.

One of the members of the tribunal, M. de Coras, proposed as a final test, before applying the torture, the last resort of justice in barbarous times, to place Bertrande between the two rivals, relying, he said, upon her woman's instinct to divine the truth. Consequently the two Martin Guerres were brought into the hall of the parliament, and a moment later Bertrande came in. She was pale and weak, exhausted by her suffering and her condition, and was hardly able to stand. Her appearance aroused compassion, and everybody was keenly attentive to what she might do. As soon as she had looked first at one, then at the other of the two men, who were stationed at the opposite sides of the hall, she turned away from the one who stood nearest her, went to the one with the wooden leg, and knelt in front of him without speaking; she clasped her hands, as if imploring pardon, and sobbed bitterly.

This simple proceeding touched all who witnessed it. Arnauld du Thill changed color, and it was thought that Martin Guerre, happy to be absolved from the suspicion of imposture by this public recognition, would raise his wife and embrace her; but he maintained his cold, stern expression.

"Madame," he said, scornfully, "pray do not weep; your tears have no power to move me, and you seek in vain to excuse yourself by citing the examples of my sisters and my uncle. A wife has a keener eye to recognize her husband, and your present action proves it; a wife errs in such case only because she wishes to err. You are the only cause of the disaster to my family, and I shall never impute it to any but you."

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Completely crushed by these words, the poor woman could not reply, and was carried to her home, almost in a dying condition.

The dignified language of the outraged husband was looked upon as an additional argument in his favor; they pitied Bertrande, the victim of an impudent imposture, but everybody agreed that Martin Guerre was justified in speaking as he did. After the experiment tried with the wife had been repeated with the sisters and other relatives, and all of them, following Bertrande's example, had felt themselves drawn toward the latest comer, the Court, upon due deliberation, rendered the following judgment which we transcribe literally:

"In the matter of the proceedings instituted by the judge at Rieux against Arnauld du Thill, called *Pansette, soi-disant* Martin Guerre, prisoner at the Conciergerie, appellant from the judgment of said judge, etc.

"The Court hath quashed and doth hereby quash the appeal of said Du Thill; and by way of punishment and reparation for the imposture, forgery, false impersonation, adultery, rape, sacrilege, larceny and other crimes committed by said Du Thill as established by said proceedings, the Court hath condemned and doth condemn him to make public apology in front of the Church of Artigues, kneeling, in his shirt, with bare head and feet, and the halter about his neck, and a lighted wax taper in his hand—there to ask pardon of God, the king, and the law, as well as of said Martin Guerre and Bertrande de Rolles, his wife; and this done, the said Du Thill shall be delivered into the hands of the executioner who shall cause him to make the circuit of the streets and squares of said Artigues, and shall lead him by the halter around his neck to the house of said Martin Guerre, there to be hanged and

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strangled upon a gallows to be erected there for that purpose, and his body afterwards burned; and for divers causes and considerations thereunto moving, the Court hath adjudged and doth adjudge the property of said Du Thill to the daughter born by him of the said De Rolles by virtue of a pretended marriage, he having falsely represented himself to be said Martin Guerre, thereby deceiving the said De Rolles—the costs of these proceedings to be first deducted. And the Court hath also discharged and doth discharge said Martin Guerre and Bertrande de Rolles, together with said Pierre Guerre, uncle of said Martin, and hath remitted and doth remit said Arnauld du Thill to the said judge at Rieux to execute the present decree according to its form and tenor.

"By the Court, the twelfth day of September, 1560."

By this sentence the gibbet was substituted for decapitation as provided for in the original sentence of the judge—the latter form of execution being reserved for noble criminals, while the bourgeoisie were hanged.

When his fate was thus determined, Arnauld du Thill's audacity deserted him. He was taken back to Artigues and there confessed his imposture at length to the Rieux magistrate. He said that the idea first occurred to him one day when he returned to the camp from Picardy, and several of his intimate friends mistook him for Martin Guerre. He thereupon made inquiries concerning the mode of life, the habits and connections of the man, and having found means to take up a position near him, watched him during the battle, and saw him fall. He carried him off the field, and by methods with which the reader is familiar excited him to the utmost in order to wrest his secrets from him. Having thus explained his fraud by natural causes

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which excluded the charge of magic and witchcraft, Arnauld du Thill repented of his crime, implored God's mercy, and prepared to meet his fate like a christian.

The next day, while the whole population of Artigues and its neighborhood were assembled in front of the church, where the culprit, barefooted, and in his shirt, with a lighted torch in his hand, knelt upon the steps of the sanctuary to make public apology, another scene, no less painful, was being enacted within Martin Guerre's house. Worn out by her mental sufferings which had hastened her confinement, Bertrande lay stretched upon her bed of pain; she implored his forgiveness whom she had innocently betrayed, and begged him to pray for the salvation of her soul. Martin Guerre, seated at her pillow, extended his hand and blessed her. She seized the hand and pressed it convulsively to her lips; she was beyond the power of speech. Suddenly there was a great noise without; it was caused by the arrival of the condemned, to undergo his punishment before Martin Guerre's house. When they hoisted him up to the cross-bar he gave a fearful shriek; another shriek inside the house made answer.

That evening the dead body of a man was burned at the stake, and the bodies of a woman and child were buried in holy ground.

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